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Harrison, Jessie Burton.

Review of the Slave ques-  
tion. Richmond, 1833.







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**REVIEW**

OF THE

# **SLAVE QUESTION,**

EXTRACTED

*From the American Quarterly Review, Dec. 1832;*

214  
726

BASED ON THE SPEECH OF TH: MARSHALL, OF FAUQUIER:

**SHOWING THAT SLAVERY**

**IS THE ESSENTIAL HINDRANCE**

**TO THE PROSPERITY OF THE**

## **SLAVE-HOLDING STATES;**

**WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO VIRGINIA.**

*Though applicable to other States where Slavery exists.*

— Martin Harrison  
THE LIBRARY  
OF CONGRESS  
**BY A VIRGINIAN.**  
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**RICHMOND:**

*Printed by T. W. White, opposite the Bell-Tavern.*

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1833.



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*From the Richmond Whig. Jan. 3, 1833.*

## REVIEW OF THE SLAVERY QUESTION.

In the American Quarterly for December, appears an article on this great subject, of peculiar ability—the most calm and philosophical spirit of enquiry—and of reasoning, to our poor judgment, unanswerable.

The article is based on the Speech of Mr. Marshall of Fauquier, and its design, says the Boston Courier, “is to show by a clear induction of facts, that slavery is the essential hindrance to the prosperity of the slave-holding States, and the necessity of prompt action to check the palpable mischief they are suffering from it.” The subject, says the same paper, is treated with particular reference to the situation of Virginia; but it is obvious that the doctrine he establishes is equally applicable to all the States, where slavery exists. The author declines, wisely, to consider the subject with reference to the iniquity of slavery in itself, asserting what is undoubtedly true, that the holding of slaves as the south is conditioned, argues not the slightest degree of moral turpitude, and that the average condition of the slave in Virginia, is by no means a bad one. [He might have added, that it was positively, nay incomparably better than that of the labouring population in Ireland, and various parts of Europe.] He demonstrates the effects of slavery to be: inanimation of public spirit—destruction of the spirit of industry in the free population—the degradation of labour itself—ruin of agriculture, by a wasteful mode of cultivation—interposing obstacles to the improvement of the soil—and the encouragement of habits and opinions, destructive of economy and enterprize.

“The writer then states the conditions on which a slave-holding State may be a prosperous one, and shows that Virginia has scarcely a single requisite to make her so. None of the States possesses them but imperfectly, except Louisiana. Those conditions are an inexhaustible soil—a small territory—a climate, the products of which can be reared in but a few spots on the globe, and for which there is a permanent demand—and which is insupportable by white labourers.”—*Boston Courier*.

There are a thousand reflections in this article fraught with wisdom and forecast. The essay of Professor Dew, we learn, has been studiously circulated, and we hope measures will be taken to secure an equal circulation for this, in our opinion, far more worthy of it. At a more convenient season, we shall transfer liberally to our columns, from both articles.

The author is JESSE BURTON HARRISON, Esq., late of Virginia, now of New Orleans; a gentleman destined to reflect honour upon his native soil, and to elevate the American reputation.





# ABOLITION QUESTION.

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FROM THE AMERICAN QUARTERLY REVIEW, DEC. 1832.

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*The Speech of Thomas Marshall, in the House of Delegates of Virginia, on the Abolition of Slavery. Delivered, Friday, January 20, 1832. Richmond: pp. 12.*

THE debate in the Legislature of Virginia at its last session is, beyond all question, the event which most materially affects the prospects of negro slavery in the United States. Every thing tells of a spirit that is busy inspecting the very foundations of society in Virginia—a spirit new, suddenly created, and vaster in its grasp than any hitherto called forth in her history. There is a serious disposition to look the evil of slavery (nothing less!) in the face, and to cast about for some method of diminishing or extirpating it. Causes not now needful to be named, have given birth to this disposition, so little to have been anticipated two years ago. The possibility of ridding Virginia of the evil of slavery in our generation, in that of our children, or of our grandchildren, is suddenly made the legitimate subject of temperate debate. We shall presume to speak of it therefore in a temper of becoming gravity, and we hope without danger of giving offence to any one.

It matters not, though a majority of the people of Virginia be not, in the first moment, willing to adopt or even to consider plans already prepared for diminishing the mischiefs of slavery. It matters not, though it were conceded, that all the plans suggested last winter in the House of Delegates, were marked with the crudeness of inexperience, and the inadvertence of haste, and would all require to be abandoned for others more mature. It matters not, though it were conceded, that a becoming regard for public decency forbade any final step on so perilous a subject in the very first year of its agitation. We fix our eyes on the single circumstance, that the public mind of Virginia permitted, nay encouraged, the open deliberations of the General Assembly, for weeks, on the momentous topic never before thought fit to be mentioned but in a whisper. The first blow has been struck; the greatest achievement that the cause of emancipation admitted, was then effected. *Le grand mot est lâché*—the great word is spoken out, and can never be recalled. Debate and speculation are on the instant made legitimate. The secret pulsation of so

many hearts, sick with the despair of an evil they dared not propose to remedy, has now found a voice, and the wide air has rung with it.

We rejoice that we live to see this subject thrown into the vast field, in which are to be found so many of the prime interests of the human race—the same from which the ancient tragic poets derived their groundwork: the warfare between liberty and necessity, or more accurately, the sublime strife between the desirable and the actual. We rejoice, that full of doubts, embarrassments, and dangers, as is the thought of attacking the evil, as near alike to the attributes of Fate as seems its defiance of opposition, the obdurate unchangeableness of it even in degree, yet it is thrown open to speculation and experiment, and now stands fairly exposed to assault from the great Crusaders which have thus far redeemed our mortal condition from barbarism and misery—the unconquerable free will and undying hope. No mortal evil can for ever withstand this open war; these its antagonist principles will be like the undercurrent at sea, “that draws a thousand waves unto itself,” will strive against obstacle, repair disaster, and convert all the contemporary events into good for their cause. Recent occurrences in the political history of foreign countries abundantly exemplify this fact.

The seal is now broken. We exhort the sons of Virginia to toil for the diminution of this evil, with all the prudence, the delicacy, and gravity requisite in the application of a great public remedy to a wide-spread disease. And in the worst event, let them rest assured that history has few places more enviable than would be the lot of the last advocate, who, left without allies, should come, in the grand language of Milton’s prose, “through the chance of good or of evil report, to be the *SOLE ADVOCATE OF A DISCOURAGED TRUTH.*”\*

We fix not our expectations so much on legislative enactments: as far as these are compulsory and proceed only from a division in the minds of men, we deprecate them. But we direct our anticipations to the general will of the people of the state. Let reason and persuasion be the instruments of promoting a voluntary action. Until not merely a majority, but a great majority of the freemen of Virginia be convinced, persuaded, moved to demand liberation from the ruin that is consuming the land, there will be unworthy rudeness and indecorum in bringing in the violence of a new statute to begin the work of purification. She is now in the breathing space after the first mention of it; the spontaneous burst of agitated feeling of last winter shall either perish, or resolve itself into a wise, patient, judicious movement. The summer will have witnessed, by the temper it has matured in her, whether Virginia is capable—not of deep sensibility to supposed claims of patriotism; that the world knows her to possess—not of

\* Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.

gusts of enthusiasm for purposes that are lifted above selfish cupidity; all, who know her, have witnessed her passionate attachment to abstract truth, her susceptibility of lasting emotions in its behalf, and her readiness for every mode of self-denial, of privation, and self-sacrifice. But we are to witness whether, recalling her affections from the distant objects to which they have certainly been too exclusively devoted, she is adequate to manage her own possible destiny for good; whether she is framed for that high sort of civil prudence which knows how to project a vast plan of heroic justice, that it will require generations of men of the same temper to execute. We do not hesitate to believe that the ultimate result is not dubious: we repose the fullest confidence in Virginia, the mother of so many colonized commonwealths.

Unhappy America! how portentous a fate has proved hers! It was not enough that the dowry which she brought to Europe when first discovered, the bountiful millions which her mines of gold and silver yielded in the first hundred years, served only to enable Ferdinand, Charles V., and Philip II., to establish the Inquisition, and to crush the freedom of conscience by long and bloody wars, which nothing but American gold could have supported! It was not enough that her fine race of generous barbarians, (the finest the world ever saw) were to perish before the face of civilizing man! But she must suffer too, the pollution of being used as if discovered solely for the wo of Africa! To the discovery of this continent is due the existence in the world to-day of a single slave with a Christian master.

It was in 1620, thirteen years after the first settlement of Jamestown, that a Dutch vessel from the Coast of Guinea sailed up James River, and brought the first slave into British America.—We can almost see the hateful form of the slaver, as with her cargo of crime and misery, “rigged with curses,” she bursts into the silent Chesapeake. We see her keel ploughing the pure, because yet free, waters, and now nearing the English plantations. Fatal, fatal ship!—What does she there? Can it indeed be that she comes (and so soon!) to pour the deadliest of hereditary woes into our cradle? How durst the loathsome freight she bears, the accursed shape of slavery intrude itself, of all lands on the earth, upon this vestal soil? How thrust itself among a race of Anglo-Saxon men in the seventeenth century? how bring its deformity athwart the bold and noble sweep of the common law, to mar it all? how mix its curses up (to a greater or less degree in all the British Colonies,) with the mass of all our acts, at our hearths, our public councils, and our altars, and bring pollution to our childhood and decrepitude to our youth? On a land set apart by Providence for the best growth of manhood—where Magna Charta, the Petition of Rights, the Habeas Corpus, the Bill of Rights, and last, but greatest, the profession in their fulness and sincerity of the grand, transcendent rights of reason and nature, of liberty



and equality, were to have their deepest roots;—a land the world's refuge and the world's hope;—how shall we not weep when the ineradicable seeds are here planted, that shall curse with contradiction and inconsistency all the height of its pride, and make the manly and dilated heart, in the midst of its triumph at one side of its condition, faint and sick, sick to the core with the dust and ashes of the other side!

We have put the truly statesmanlike speech of the son of the Chief Justice of the United States at the head of this article, because we believe it expresses the opinions of a majority of reflecting men in Virginia, and because it coincides more nearly with our own views than any of the other speeches in that debate. If it be inferior in fervid eloquence to some of the others, it possesses the rarer merit of coolness, impartiality, decision, and uncommon political sagacity. We cannot adequately express the satisfaction its perusal gave us, without running into panegyric, which we are sure would be little acceptable to him. Mr. Marshall voted as well against Mr. T. J. Randolph's motion for submitting the question of abolition at once to the people, and Mr. Preston's, declaring immediate action by the legislature then sitting to be expedient, as against Mr. Goode's motion to discharge the select committee from the consideration of all petitions, memorials, and resolutions which had for their object the manumission of persons held in servitude under the laws of Virginia, and thus declare it not expedient to legislate at all on the subject. As regards the two first motions, Mr. Marshall believed that the public mind was not yet prepared for the question of abolition; that the members of that session were not elected in reference to it; and that there were other modes of ascertaining public sentiment on that great question, less agitating than would the forcing it upon the people for promiscuous discussion. He objected further to Mr. Randolph's proposition (which embraced only one plan of abolition—that fixing the year 1840 as the time after which all slaves born should be declared public property,) because it was too specific, and instead of merely asserting a principle, offered a peculiar plan obnoxious to many objections. But he had still greater objections to Mr. Goode's motion to dismiss the subject wholly from the consideration of the house, with the implied understanding that the legislature decidedly repelled all invitations to deliberate on the possibility of diminishing the evils of slavery. He declared himself entirely convinced that slavery was fruitful of many woes to Virginia, that a general sense of *insecurity* pervaded the state, and that the citizens were deeply impressed with the conviction that something must be done. He said that there were sure indications that some action is imperatively required of the legislature by the people—that the evil has attained a magnitude, which demands all the skill and energy of prompt and able legislation. He follows up this opinion with much valuable illustration and a number of useful

practical suggestions. Without entirely assenting to the objections of Mr. Marshall to the two first motions above named, we are delighted with the general tone of his remarks.

Before beginning to unfold more fully our own views of the present exigency in Virginia, we take occasion to declare distinctly that our purpose is not by overcharged pictures of the iniquity of slavery, or the cruel lot of the slaves, to raise a storm of gratuitous indignation in the minds of the people of the United States against Virginia. We believe that there is not the slightest moral turpitude in holding slaves under existing circumstances in the south. We *know* too that the ordinary condition of slaves in Virginia is *not* such as to make humanity weep for his lot.—Our solicitations to the slaveholders, it will be perceived, are founded but little on *the miseries of the blacks*. We direct ourselves almost exclusively to the injuries slavery inflicts on the whites. And of these evils suffered by the whites, the evil consequences of practising the immorality of slaveholding will not be our mark. Reproach and recrimination on such a subject would answer no good purpose; it would naturally provoke defiance from the slaveholders. All the eloquent invectives of the British abolitionists have not made one convert in the West Indies. This is no part of our humour. It is *our* object to lure Virginia onward in her present hopeful state of mind. We mean to confine every word we write to Virginia. The whole scope of this article will be to *show the necessity of her promptly doing something to check the palpable mischiefs her prosperity is suffering from slavery*. We design to show that all her sources of *economical* prosperity are poisoned by slavery, and we shall hint at its moral evils only as they occasion or imply destruction to the real prosperity of a nation. Unless we first make this position impregnable, we shall ask no one to sacrifice merely to abstract humanity and justice. Nor shall we insist on Virginia's beginning action on this momentous subject, until we have shown that her genuine ultimate interest will be promoted by it. The best way of persuading men of this world to deeds which involve the sacrifice of present interests, is to convince them that a greater prospective interest may be thereby secured. We shall strive then to procure the concurrence of self-interest as well as the approbation of humanity. Hence, even should we succeed in making out our case as to Virginia, it will be instantly remarked that we have said very little that will touch South Carolina and Georgia, and scarcely any thing applicable to Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. If the prosperity of any of these is founded in circumstances of soil, climate, products, &c., of such nature and degree, as that it will not sink under the precarious specific (neck or nothing) of slave labour, *a la bonne heure*—let them go on. This is undoubtedly the case more or less of the sugar, cotton, and rice plantation states. But it is not the case of Virginia. We propose to treat



I. Of the injury slavery does to the prosperity of Virginia. Let us cursorily indicate some of the evils which the experience of the United States shows to be consequent on slavery under ordinary circumstances, some of which Virginia has suffered in common with other states, and of some of which she has been peculiarly the victim. 1. An inertness of most of the springs of prosperity—a want of what is commonly called public spirit.—2. Where slave labour prevails, it is scarcely practicable for free labour to co-exist with it to any great extent. Not that the latter would not deserve the preference, both for cheapness and efficiency, but that many obvious causes conspire to prevent the rivalry being perseveringly sustained. Freedom being itself regarded as a privilege in a nation that has slaves, there is a natural tendency to consider exemption from manual labour as the chief mark of elevation above the class of slaves. In a republic this tendency is vastly increased. A disposition to look on all manual labour as menial and degrading, may safely be set down as a distemper of the most disastrous kind. We shall not dilate on this. It must instantly be admitted that nothing can compensate a nation for the destruction of all the virtues which flow from mere industry. Virginia has experienced this most signally: had her slave labour been ten times as productive as it has been, and grant that she possesses all the lofty qualities ever claimed for her in their highest degree, she would still have been the loser by contracting this ruinous disposition. Nothing but the most abject necessity would lead a white man to hire himself to work in the fields under the overseer, and we must say that we cannot refuse to sympathize with the free labourer who finds it irksome to perform hard work by the side of a slave.—3. Agriculture is the best basis of national wealth. “Arts,” says that eminent farmer Mr. John Taylor of Caroline, “improve the works of nature; when they injure it they are not arts but barbarous customs. It is the office of agriculture as an art not to impoverish, but to fertilize the soil and make it more useful than in its natural state. Such is the effect of every species of agriculture which can aspire to the name of an art.” Now it is a truth that an *improving* system of agriculture cannot be carried on by slaves. The negligent wasteful habits of slaves who are not interested in the estate, and the exacting cupidity of transient overseers who are interested in extorting from the earth the greatest amount of production, render all slave agriculture invariably exhausting. How many plantations worked by slaves are there in Virginia which are not perceptibly suffering the sure process of exhaustion? Perhaps not one, except a few on the water courses, composed of the alluvial soils which are virtually inexhaustible. The uncertainty of the profits of a crop generally deters the planters in Virginia from giving standing wages to their overseers—indeed, it has too often happened that the salary of the overseer has absorbed all the proceeds. Hence it is usual to give him, in-

stead of salary, a share of the crop. The murderous effects of this on the fertility of the soil may well be conceived. An estate submitted to overseers entitled to a share of the crop, (who are changed of course, almost yearly) suffers a thousandfold more than would English farms put out on leases of one or two years to fresh lessees. Twenty-one years is thought too short a term there.—4. It is a fact that no soil but the richest, and that in effect inexhaustible, can be profitably cultivated by slaves. In the Legislature of Virginia it was repeatedly said that her lands were poor, and for that reason none but slaves could be brought to work them well. On the contrary, poor lands and those of moderate fertility can never repay the expense of slave labour, or bear up under the vices of that slovenly system.—5. In modern times, in most cases where slave labour prevails, it has been found in plantation states and colonies. There are many obvious reasons why, if profitable any where, it must only be there. Now, if this be the case, it would appear that slavery to be profitable is essentially incompatible with a dense population—at all events, with a relatively dense population of freemen. No country can afford to be given up exclusively to agriculture in the shape of plantation tillage, or to devote the entire attention of all the men it rears to that occupation, except its soil be extremely fertile and its products of the richest nature. Under other circumstances, the soil and products not making adequate returns, there is a vast waste of capabilities for other purposes, which the surface of many countries might well answer.—6. It seems agreed among the economists of the south that slaves are unfit for the business of manufactures. A most sensible essay was published in Philadelphia in 1827 by Dr. Jones, afterwards superintendent of the Patent Office at Washington, to show that slaves are not necessarily unfit for this employment. We were persuaded at the time, that, if his position were true, it would prove the most important of all suggestions in an economical view, to Virginia. It has surprised us, indeed, that the advocates of the perpetuity of slavery in Virginia have not seen the immense advantage of such an argument to their side of the question. But the entire current of opinion in the south (led by an invincible sentiment of hostility to the protective system) is that states where slave labour prevails, and where the whole capital for labour is vested in slaves, cannot manufacture. It will need no words to show what an injury this voluntary disability inflicts on a country which may happen to have the most felicitous capacities for manufactures.—7. Where slave labour prevails, it would appear that the rearing a large class of skilful mechanics is greatly discouraged. The slaves themselves of course never make mechanics except of the coarsest description. Although the whites in the cities are not entirely averse to becoming artisans, yet, in the country, the natural policy of the rich planters to have mechanics among their slaves to do all the needful business on their estates, de-

prives the white mechanics of their chief encouragement to perfect themselves in their trades, diminishes the demand for their services, and generally has the effect of expelling them from one neighbourhood to another until they finally expatriate themselves.—8. Slave labour is, without controversy, dearer than free. It suffices to state, that in the one case you have a class of labourers that have a direct interest in doing and saving as little as possible, so that they barely escape punishment; in the other a class, every member of which has a direct interest in producing and saving as much as possible. But this position is too well established to justify any one in an argument to prove it. The categories wherein the contrary holds true are cumulatively: *a.* it must be in a plantation country; *b.* it must be in a soil extremely and inexhaustibly fertile; *c.* where the products are of the greatest value; *d.* and after all, it must be where white men cannot endure the climate and the nature of the cultivation.—9. The experience of the United States has shown that slavery decidedly discourages immigration (to use Dr. Southey's word) from foreign countries into the sections of country where it is prevalent. It is not a sufficient answer to this to say that the emigrants are in general allured to the United States by the temptation of the rich country in the west, so that slavery cannot be said to repel them from the southern states. It is not true of the best emigrants that come to our shores, that they are intent on pushing into the pathless forest, to be there banished from all the blessings of a settled country. This is in fact the positive passion of none but the hardy native pioneers, the Boones of Vermont, of New York, and Virginia. The Germans, for example, who are perhaps the most valuable of the emigrants to America, are not people who would prefer to make their home in the midst of the extreme discomforts and often cruel privations which the pioneers undergo. Besides, what repels all those emigrants who are not agriculturists, and whose occupations lead them among crowds of men? Of immigration into the slave-holding States, except in some of the western States, where the principle of slavery is not yet predominant, it may be said there is none. The emigrants understand that their hope of employment there is forestalled, that the only labour wanted is indigenous to the soil; they feel that that labour is incompatible with their own, and they shrink from the idea of giving their children, who are to live by manual labour, a home in a slave-labour land, while fair regions, dedicated as well to domestic as to civil freedom, tempt their adventurous footsteps. With this evil may be classed the tendency of the whites of these States to emigrate from the soil of their birth.—10. Slavery begets inevitably a train of habits and opinions which, to say the least, are destructive of all those springs of prosperity which depend on economy, frugality, enterprise. Young people bred up to be maintained by slaves are apt to imbibe improvident habits. Of its favourable operation on the spirit of liberty in the whites, we



are not disposed to question the well known opinion of Mr. Burke: the passage we refer to, is itself an evidence of the profound knowledge he possessed of the human heart. We consider it truer, however, of the spirit of liberty in its aspect of resistance to foreign oppression: in its home aspect it is, we think, comparatively just. But as relates to its operation in equalizing the whites with each other, we throw out the suggestion without note or comment, that *no property gives rise to greater inequalities than slave property*. We question, too, whether it could well be maintained that the *beau ideal* of a nabob—(we use the word in its fair, not invidious sense,)—endow him with nobleness of soul, sensibility, the utmost delicacy of honour, generosity, and hospitality—is the finest specimen of our species. There are many solid and essential virtues (wholly disconnected with those named) which could not so well be dispensed with as some of those, in going to make up the being of whom *par excellence* nature might stand up and say “this is a man.”

We can now venture to define pretty accurately what sort of a country that must be, which having regard solely to the economical principles, is adapted to be for a long term of years a prosperous slave-labour State. It must possess an extremely rich soil, hence under most circumstances be a comparatively small country, (otherwise the greater the difficulty of finding a uniformly fine soil, and consequently the impossibility of making the *whole* State flourish), in a latitude the products of which, from their scarcity in the world, the permanent demand for them, and the possibility of rearing them in but few spots on the globe, are sure of a market at high prices, where the culture of such crops requires that the slaves be worked together in bodies, so that the constant supervision necessary over them may be performed by a few whites, and finally in a climate so nearly tropical, or otherwise precarious, as to make the exposure and toil insupportable to free (say *white*) labourers. A country uniting all these requisites may be prosperous with slave labour. It possesses certain sources of wealth, by the help of which it may dispense with many others, that are the necessary resource of countries of moderate fertility, and which are under different general circumstances. Such a country seems to need the moral-economical springs less. It will of necessity contain a sparse white population, but it may be formidable in war from its superior relative wealth. The countries growing cotton, rice, and the sugar cane, bountifully, are of this description. For aught we know, Brazil may fall under the definition. The principal West India islands appear to be entitled to expect prosperity, (supposing no adverse adventitious circumstances) but Louisiana unites all the requisites more perfectly perhaps than any other country. South Carolina and Georgia do it but imperfectly, on account of there being so large a portion of both of them to which such description would not at all apply; Alabama and Mississippi do more per-

fectly than they. But it may boldly be said that *Virginia possesses scarcely a single requisite to make a prosperous slave-labour State.*

*She has not the inexhaustible rich soils:* her earth originally yielded fair returns to hard labour judiciously directed, but all such soils, as she has learned by bitter experience, are fated, under the hands of slaves, to deterioration down to utter barrenness. *She has too large a territory:* the curse of the presence of slaves and the monopoly of labour in their hands, is all over the State; the spots really adapted for profitable slave labour are few and scattered. *She has not the sort of products:* only a small part of the State produces cotton; the culture of tobacco, which was originally the general staple of Old Virginia Proper, after destroying immense tracts of good lands, is shrinking into a very diminished compass, and scarcely repays the cost of production under the average prices of the last fifteen years. If any one would cast his eye over the list of the Tobacco Inspections established by law, in the revised code of Virginia, he would smile to see places mentioned for inspection warehouses, in quarters of Virginia where no man has ever seen a hundred weight of tobacco. Besides this, there is an unlimited competition springing up around her, to reduce prices to nothing. With regard to the crops of tobacco of the western states, we can say with confidence, that there is a regular annual increase in quantity, with great improvement in its curing and management; so that it is fast taking the place of Virginia tobacco for consumption in the leaf in the north of Europe, and as strips in Great Britain. The article of tobacco is now cultivated in Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Tennessee, and in Canada, as well as Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia. The quantity raised is altogether too great for consumption. The other products of Virginia are the ordinary growth of all temperate, and most northern regions. *She has not the climate which would put slaves on the vantage ground above whites:* every part of her territory is adapted to the men of all climates, and she has not a foot of soil which nature declares that none but blacks shall cultivate, nor a product the cultivation of which demands lives and labours baser than those of white men. Tobacco is notoriously cultivated with success by whites in any part of the world, which is temperate enough to grow it. It is then a total miscalculation in every point of view—a false position for Virginia to have allotted to herself the exclusive labour of slaves.

But appeal is made to the history of the economy of Virginia to contradict this assertion. Is it demanded for instance, why Virginia should prosper before the Revolution as she did, with her slave labour, if there be a fatal error in her adoption of slavery? We may answer, that there is no great mystery in that. Virginia while a colony never did furnish the miracles of great and sudden fortunes which the West India and South Carolina



nabobs used to exhibit in England. Adam Smith in his day made this remark. At that time fine tobacco was an article only grown in Virginia and Maryland, and the prices were relatively to the times very high; whereas now and for all future time, a competition wholly beyond the conception of that day has completely revolutionized the market. But admit that the colony was very prosperous: if from this it is meant to argue that Virginia may again be so under the same system, we hope it will not at least be denied that the Revolution found almost all the lands which had been opened nearly or quite exhausted, showing plainly that the preceding hundred years had been passed in fits of profitable planting from the frequent resort to successive new lands. Mr. Taylor of Caroline had understood that 60,000 hogsheads of tobacco were exported from Virginia, when the whole population did not exceed 150,000. Had the fertility of the country by possibility remained undiminished, (as he says it would, if her slave agriculture had been any thing else than "a barbarous custom," not an art,) Virginia ought in 1810 to have exported 240,000 hogsheads, or their equivalent in other produce, and at present nearly the double of that. Thus the agricultural exports of Virginia in 1810 would, at the estimated prices of the Custom House at that time, have been seventeen millions of dollars, and now at least thirty-four, while it is known that they are not of late years greater than from three to five millions! This will at once show that the great crops of the colonial times were forced, or we may say *exaggerated* by the possession of means, which will never again be in her hands.

The fact that the whole agricultural products of the State at present, do not exceed in value the exports eighty or ninety years ago, when it contained not a sixth of the population, and when not a third of the surface of the State (at present Virginia) was at all occupied, is however a very striking proof of the decline of its agriculture. What is now the productive value of an estate of land and negroes in Virginia? We state as the result of extensive inquiry, embracing the last fifteen years, that a very great proportion of the larger plantations, with from fifty to one hundred slaves, actually bring their proprietors in debt at the end of a short term of years, notwithstanding what would once in Virginia have been deemed very sheer economy; that much the larger part of the considerable landholders are content, if they barely meet their plantation expenses without a loss of capital; and that, of those who make any profit, it will in none but rare instances average more than one to one and a half per cent. on the capital invested. The case is not materially varied with the smaller proprietors. Mr. Randolph of Roanoke, whose sayings have so generally the raciness and the truth of proverbs, has repeatedly said in Congress, that the time was coming when the masters would run away from the slaves and be advertised by them in the public papers. A decided improvement in the Vir-

ginia system is taking place in some parts of the State, which consists in the abandonment of the culture of tobacco for that of wheat, Indian corn, &c., which can be produced on soil too poor for tobacco, requires fewer labourers and will not be so apt to reduce the fertility of the soil still lower. This is a judicious thing in itself, but here again recurs the truth we have already set forth: plantations with such products as these never can be profitably managed with slave labour. Wheat and corn will not do for this; let the planter turn his sons in to work his lands, and then these products will suffice. Tobacco was the only article which ever could by possibility justify the expense of slave labour in Virginia; and now we see that the wiser planters are to a great degree withdrawing their lands from it.

There is however one way in which capital invested in slaves may be said to be productive. We will now let the reader into a secret of slave-holding economy. The only form in which it can safely be said that slaves on a plantation are profitable in Virginia, is in the multiplication of their number by births. If the proprietor, beginning with a certain number of negroes, can but keep them for a few years from the hands of the sheriff or the slave trader, though their labour may have yielded him not a farthing of nett revenue, he finds that gradually but surely, his capital stock of negroes multiplies itself, and yields, if nothing else, a palpable interest of young negroes. While very young they occasion small expense, but they render none or small service; when grown up, their labour, as we have already seen, hardly does more than balance the expense they occasion. The process of multiplication will not in this way advance the master towards the point of a nett revenue; he is not the richer in income with the fifty slaves than with twenty. Yet these young negroes have their value: and what value? The value of the slaves so added to his number is the certain price for which they will at any time sell to the southern trader. Should the humanity of the proprietor, however, and his rare fortune in keeping out of debt, prevail on him never to treat his slaves as live stock for traffic, he finds himself incumbered with the same unproductive burden as before. That master alone finds productive value in his increase of slaves, who chooses to turn the increase of his capital, at regular intervals, into money at the highest market price! There are, we make haste to say, very many masters with whom it is a fixed rule never to sell a slave, except for incorrigibly bad character, so long as the pressure of necessity does not compel it. There are some who would feel it to be the wanton breach of a tie next in sanctity to the most sacred of the domestic relations. But such sensibility cannot be supposed to be universal. Accordingly, the State does derive a tangible profit from its slaves: this is true to the heart's content of the adversaries of abolition, and that by means of yearly sales to the negro traders. An account, on which we may rely, sets down the an-

nual number of slaves sold to go out of the State at six thousand, or more than half the number of births! The population returns show only a yearly addition of four thousand eight hundred to the slaves remaining in the State. If all these sales were the result of the necessities of the masters, while it must forever be lamented, it would at the same time be the most portentous proof of the financial ruin of the planters of the State. But if otherwise, if but a common course of business regularly gone into for profit, what volumes does it speak of the degradation to which slavery may reduce its supporters! And will "the aspiring blood of Lancaster" endure it to be said that a Guinea is still to be found in America, and that Guinea is Virginia? That children are reared with the express object of sale into distant regions, and that in numbers but little less than the whole number of annual births? It may be that there is a small section of Virginia (perhaps we could indicate it) where the theory of population is studied with reference to the yearly income from the sale of slaves. Shall the profits to Virginia, from this contaminated source, be alleged as an economical argument to magnify the sacrifice involved in the abolition of slavery, and this too by statesmen who profess to execrate the African slave trade? For ourselves, we can see but little difference between this form of the internal slave trade and the African trade itself. But we have too deep a stake ourselves in the good name of the land of Washington and Jefferson, to be willing to admit that this form of profit from slaves is cherished by any but a very few persons. This is not then an income which Virginia loves to reap. She scorns those who resort to it, and will count lightly of the sacrifice which the extinction of this fountain of impure wealth would involve.

Banishing this then out of view, there is no productive value of slaves in Virginia. Shut up all outlet into the southern and southwestern States, and the price of slaves in Virginia would sink down to a cypher. Without the possibility of deriving from slave labour any of the benefits, by which in some countries it seems to compensate (whether adequately or not) for its pernicious moral effects, Virginia is cursed with an institution unproductive of good to her, and potent in mischiefs beyond all her fears. If ever there was a specific, which failing of its possible good effects, would induce irremediable pains, it is slavery. We check the struggling inclination to paint the woes Virginia has suffered from its miscarriage, in their true colours, but the truth would seem exaggeration. Take then the following temperate detail from the speech of Mr. Marshall, every word of which is true by the experience of Virginia:

"Wherefore, then, object to slavery? Because it is ruinous to the whites--retards improvement--roots out an industrious population--banishes the yeomanry of the country--deprives the spinner, the weaver, the smith, the shoemaker, the carpenter, of employment and support. This evil admits of no remedy; it is increasing and will continue to increase, until the whole country will be inundated with one black wave



covering its whole extent, with a few white faces here and there floating on the surface. The master has no capital but what is vested in [slaves;] the father, instead of being richer for his sons, is at a loss to provide for them—there is no diversity of occupations, no incentive to enterprise. Labour of every species is disreputable because performed mostly by slaves. Our towns are stationary, our villages almost everywhere declining, and the general aspect of the country marks the curse of a wasteful, idle, reckless population, who have no interest in the soil, and care not how much it is impoverished. Public improvements are neglected, and the entire continent does not present a region for which nature has done so much, and art so little. If cultivated by free labour, the soil of Virginia is capable of sustaining a dense population, among whom labour would be honourable, and where ‘the busy hum of men’ would tell that all were happy, and that all were free.”

Virginia has suffered, and is now suffering under all the ten specifications just given, and in a greater degree than any other of the slave-holding States could. Her statesmen and engineers mourn over her inertness of spirit for public improvements; her economists mourn over the little inclination of her citizens to labour of any kind; her agriculturists upbraid her for letting the soil sink into irrecoverable exhaustion, that she is burdened with the dearest sort of labour, and persists in applying to a country of originally moderate fertility, a system absolutely ruinous to any but the richest alluvial soils; that industry and frugality are banished; that she renders it virtually impossible to open a new source of wealth in manufactures, and that while the principle of population is almost stagnant among her whites, and her own sons are departing from her, she repulses by her domestic relations all the emigrants to America from the old world, who might else come in to repair her ruin. It is ridiculous to talk of the prosperity of a country wholly agricultural, with slave labour and exhausted lands. The proud homes of Virginia, from the Revolution down to this day, have been passing from the hands of their high-minded proprietors, to the humble overseers that used to *sit below the salt* at their board, and from them in their turn to some other newer *parvenus*: agriculture has failed to enrich. Of the white emigrants from Virginia, at least half are hard working men, who carry away with them little besides their tools and a stout heart of hope: the mechanic trades have failed to give them bread. Commerce she has little, shipping none, and it is a fact that the very staple of the State, tobacco, is not exported by her own capital—the State does virtually a commission business in it. All the sources of prosperity, moral and economical, are deadened; there is a general discontent with one’s lot; in some of the first settled and choicest parts of her territory, symptoms are not wanting of desolate antiquity. And all this in youthful America, and in Virginia too, the fairest region of America, and with a race of people inferior to none in the world in its capacity to constitute a prosperous nation.

There are some facts disclosed by the population returns for 1830, which we are not aware have been fully brought to the public notice. Every one is now acquainted with the uncomfortable truth, that the whites east of the Blue Ridge had in 1790 a majority of 25,000, and that in the course of forty years they

have not only lost it, but suffered the blacks to get an ascendancy in number to the extent of 81,000: thus the advance of the blacks is 106,000 in that half of the State in that period. But we may see by the subjoined table that there are not a few counties of middle as well as lower Virginia, (component parts of eastern Virginia) which have actually diminished in white population in the last ten years! The first five are counties between the Blue Ridge and the head of tide-water; the others below the head of tide-water.

<i>Whites in 1820</i>			1830.	<i>Whites in 1820.</i>			1830.
Brunswick	5859	5397	King & Queen	5460	4714		
Amelia	3409	3293	King William	3449	3155		
Goochland	3976	3857	Lancaster	2388	1976		
Loudon	16144	15516	Northumberland	4134	4029		
Mecklenburg	7710	7543	Sussex	4155	4118		
Fairfax	6224	4892	Stafford	4788	4713		
James City	1556	1284	Warwick	620	619		

These counties at an average annual increase of three per cent. (which is sufficiently moderate) would have added more than 20,000 to their aggregate numbers; they have sustained a loss of near 5000 in ten years, which is fully one twelfth of their capital in 1820. Conjecturally the people in these counties are as prolific as elsewhere; emigration, the result of the characteristic ills of Virginia, has done most to occasion this loss. All of these are fine counties.

We freely grant that a slow increase of population is possible in a country where the utmost is made of all its resources, and that in certain cases it implies a higher degree of civilization, for prudence in such matters denotes civilization it seems. But unless the employment of prudential checks be suggested by danger of an overcrowded population, certainly they are little to be desired by statesmen. The unnecessary introduction of prudential checks leads to the application of means destined by Providence for the subsistence of men, to a thousand less worthy purposes; as, when that food, which would support the same number or double of human beings, is bestowed on pleasure, horses and dogs. Where population has not yet approximated the capacity of the country to furnish subsistence, it is premature and unhappy to begin the employment of too much prudence, to discourage marriages. In fact, this never will occur, unless some powerful agents have been at work to benumb, not merely the spring of population, but all the springs of prosperity. A very slow increase, or a diminution, would be an indication of want of prosperity not to be mistaken in most parts of the United States; for example, where subsistence is easy to obtain, and population can scarcely any where be said to have pressed on subsistence. It is said by some persons that the preventive checks (prudential) are in fuller operation in Virginia than in the north.



We confess we had entertained an opposite idea. What is the usual age of marriages in Virginia and what in New England? Is forecast indeed more prevalent in Virginia than in New England? If this be indeed so, then unhappy causes must have been at work to produce it.

But it has been further said that the *standard of comfort* is higher in Virginia than in the northern states, that this denotes higher civilization, and thus the inertness of the principle of population is her highest eulogy. If this be her reliance for a high eulogium, we are sorry to say that the ground is rapidly slipping from under her feet, for the standard of comfort in Virginia has greatly lowered and is daily lowering. All the chief glories of Virginia style are faded: gone is the massy coach with its stately *attelage* of four and six horses, shut is the beneficent hall-door, which, as if nailed wide open, once welcomed all comers to its princely hospitality! The watering places no longer blaze with the rich but decent pomp of the Virginian, the cities but rarely bear witness to his generous expense. Every thing indicates that he has reduced his idea of a becoming style of living to a very moderate scale. This ingenious supposition, therefore, will not account for the stagnation of population. The actual state of the standard of comfort, in effect, is itself a part of the universal evidence of her decline. If you would assert of any part of the United States, where the population was very slowly increasing, stationary, or retrograde, that it is not the worse off for that, you must at least exhibit proof that the positive amount of wealth of that part has been augmenting; and we may add, that, to be conclusive, the augmentation must be in the inverse ratio of the difference between the average activity of the principle of population in the United States, and its very reduced activity in that particular part of the country. If Massachusetts or Rhode Island could be said to be stationary in population, it might unquestionably be said of them too, that their augmentation of wealth and general prosperity was in this or a greater ratio.

But we look on this whole subject of the increase of national wealth, population, &c., in the case of Virginia, from a somewhat more elevated point. There are involved herein high and solemn obligations on Virginia if she would ever strive to fulfil her destiny. The introduction of industry and enterprize is matter to her of moral obligation; the endeavour to add to the stock of wealth of the state, as a token and source of general prosperity, is even a moral duty in her case. It is the distinguishing glory and responsibility of the American States, that

"In their proper motion *they* ascend;  
 ————descent and fall  
 To *them* is adverse."

It is only by "compulsion and laborious flight" that they sink at all. The fitting herself for the rivalry in prosperity and mo-

ral dignity, which the Old World beholds in North America with awe and wonder, is the most august of all interests and duties, it seems to us, in the appointment of the Providence of the Almighty, save only one: *conscience* and *liberty* are the highest concerns to her and to every people! Let any one select for himself out of the pictures of the prosperity of the United States drawn in the books of travellers, of public economists, or of political speculators: Europe sighs at these bright sketches of transatlantic felicity; yet, of all these brilliant traits, how few are true of Virginia! Indeed though literally true of some parts of America, they are scarcely at all descriptive of this, or of any among the older slaveholding states. Suppose the war of American independence had resulted in nothing but the establishment of the Atlantic slaveholding states as new sovereignties:—the world would have been still to seek for a home for the emigrants of all nations, and for the grand series of spectacles which are said to be the dearest sight in the eyes of the powers above: that of men congregating together to found new cities under just laws. Even as early as the date of the Federal Constitution, eastern Virginia had begun to show many of the symptoms of an old commonwealth: a tendency to decline, under the influence of an apathy almost on a level with that of the people of the Pope's dominions; while New York appeared manifestly the cradle of a vast nation. It seems to us, we must confess, that of all the states, none is more unequivocally marked out by nature for the prosperous abode of a homogeneous race of freemen than Virginia. Her's is not a land which should have been stained by the tread of a slave. A philosopher who had surveyed the map of Virginia, noted between what degrees she is placed, with what a wealth of land and water she is endowed, and how she is rounded off into an empire to herself, would hear with amazement that she had suicidally adopted slave labour. We extract the following faithful picture from the official report of the principal engineer of Virginia for the year 1827:

"No where has the kind hand of Providence been more profusely bountiful than in Virginia; blessed with a climate, and a fertile soil, producing cotton and the best tobacco, besides the common staples of the northern states, to which she even exports her flour; abounding with rich mines; her coal nearer to tide water than that of any other state. Virginia is no less favoured in her geographical position: she occupies in the Union an important central position, and the mouth of the Chesapeake; that fine harbour, always open, strongly protected against aggression, is equal even to that of New York. [Add to this that no state is more blessed in the number, character, and distribution of her rivers.] She possesses, besides, perhaps more than any other state, the elements of manufactures; she has in abundance water power, coal, iron and raw materials. With these immense resources Virginia may ask why she is not the most flourishing state in the Union? Why she does not occupy the commercial station for which nature designed her? Circumstances purely accidental and temporary can alone have produced this state of things."

It is food for irony, aye very bitter irony, to know that a country, thus made the fittest in the world for freemen, is not in fact good enough to be worked by slaves! We seem to have before

us in her the image of a youthful power of the world lapsed from her high destiny, and in the homage of filial awe and grief we bow down with trembling over her decay! It is to us men of the western world as if the "Prince of the lights of heaven, which now as a giant doth run his unwearied course, should, as it were through a languishing faintness, begin to stand and to rest himself?"\* Yet, we fondly imagine, it is but for a moment: the fiery vigour shall soon work off the corruption, and the celestial origin shall quickly show itself in a career of uneclipsed beauty. And when Virginia, by disembarassing herself of all checks on her prosperity, and purging off all her evils, is fully girt for the race she has appointed to her, we are persuaded that there is not one wholesome feeling, not one patriotic principle, which might gain her the affection of the southern states, (let her not fear this,) and the admiration of all, and that could make her eminent among commonwealths, which she would be found to want.

If such be the evils under which Virginia has already languished, it does not remain to consider whether they are likely to increase. They must increase; they are rapidly corroding all the hitherto sound elements, and they will go on to spread mischiefs of their own kind until they will be felt by all to have effected absolute ruin. But as soon as slavery has grown to a great extent, there comes in a new evil of a different cast: this is *danger*, physical danger. On this subject we forbear to touch except with a scrupulous hand. We feel all the delicacy of urging any considerations addressed to the fears of a gallant people. But there is that in the nature of a servile war, which sets at nought as well the most chivalrous courage, as the security of civil police and of military discipline. We may go on to say then, that in 1830, the whole population of Virginia was 1,211,272, of which 694,445 are whites, 469,724 are slaves, 47,103 free blacks; that 457,000 blacks are east of the Blue Ridge, while only 375,935 whites are east of the mountains.† We do not believe that in any short time to come the blacks will be able to rise and overpower the whites. But the experience of 1831 teaches what an amount of calamity in fact, and misery from alarm, may be the result of the insurrection of a contemptible handful of slaves.—These partial risings may occur at any time: are they not worthy of anticipatory apprehension? But that the time will come when the blacks will be so numerous and so concentrated in a section of the state, as to be truly formidable to the whites, we cannot doubt, if the fixed principles of our species prove but

\* Hooker, I. 3.

† It will be perceived that we have studiously avoided making invidious distinctions between Virginia east and west of the Blue Ridge, and this even at the risk of doing much injustice to the west. \* Once for all, it is to be understood that the mischiefs of slavery are much less in the west than in the east. But we are determined to regard the State as *one*, and the ills suffered by one part as the common calamity, proper for the deliberation of every county.



faithful to themselves. We have seen how slow is the increase of the white population in Virginia, and we must not overlook the fact of the rapid increase of the black. Notwithstanding the constant drain of her slaves, (say 6000, or one half of their increase) to supply the plantations of the new states, the slaves have so multiplied, that though east of the Blue Ridge in 1790 the whites had a majority of 25,000, in 1830 the blacks had grown to a majority of 81,000 ! The emigration of whites in this period has by no possibility equalled that of blacks. What are the presages to be drawn from this ? But some flatter themselves that this relative inequality will not increase—perhaps will not be even so great in 1840. Mr. Marshall has told us, that by the census of 1830, the number of slaves in Eastern Virginia under ten years of age, exceeds that of whites of the same age, more than 31,000 ! What can more solemnly show that the disparity existing in our generation is small compared with that which will in all probability exist in the generation of our children ?

But it has been said by some that even this probable increase portends no danger, if the whites do but go on increasing, though in unequal proportions. It is proved thus :

The police necessary to keep order in a community is never greater than one man out of every hundred ;—thus while the population is one hundred, the hundredth man may not be able to enforce obedience ;—when grown to a thousand, the one hundred police men may succeed better, and when arrived at a million, the decimal ten thousand is certain to maintain order under all circumstances. In this way it is pretended that the security goes on increasing. It is all a mistake, then, that rebellions have ever triumphed in countries where the police (civil or military,) amounted to ten thousand ! But every one sees up to what point it is true, that the safety increases *pari passu* with the materials of danger, and how as you pass that point the security diminishes. Virginia herself has already passed this point. We recommend this security to England in her police in Ireland : she will find the two millions of Protestants able to furnish twice ten thousand men, who demonstratively can keep down the five millions of Catholics without aid from England ; but if they cannot do it to-day, they surely will, when the two parties have each doubled their numbers. This method of deriving increasing security from redoubling danger, is parallel to Hermes Harris's definition of the indefinite article : "a method of supplying by negation." It follows from it that Virginia was all along mistaken, when, before the Revolution, she essayed three and twenty times to gain the royal assent to a law to provide for her domestic safety by prohibiting the further introduction of slaves from Africa ; that she but exposed herself to ridicule, when she taunted the king in the preamble to her constitution, with "the inhuman use of the royal negative ;" and that Louisiana has wholly blundered

in laying so many obstacles in the way of the introduction of slaves from the other States, under hope to save herself from future civil war. But the example of Brazil is pointed out to us : it is true that Brazil is imbruted by a proportion of four millions of slaves to one million of whites, and her unnatural empire still exists. Yes, and her existence hangs by a hair. If we are not misinformed, the German recruits that mutinied for ill treatment, and were quelled by the slaves being turned loose on them, (they were proclaimed free game to any slave that would massacre them—what the poor Germans would have called *vogelfrey*,) might give our speculatists a lesson on the terrors of the Brazilian slave population.

But grant it true, that the multiplication of the slaves will not go on at the present rapid rate, in Virginia : when we consider that there are adequate causes working which are certain to keep back the whites, it is impossible not to regard the increase of the slaves at any probable rate as full of danger. It is the simple case of a distinct race of people within our bosom, now nearly equal, soon to be more numerous than ourselves, exposed to every temptation (we do not say inducement) to become our deadliest foe. This is the danger which reasoning cannot check nor argument avert. Police can never save harmless against an enemy that is at your hearth and in the most confidential relations with you. Besides, what profit does slavery confer on Virginia to make any one willing to see established a standing force of five or ten thousand men, at an expense equal to that of the whole peace establishment of the army of the United States?

The only rational ground for believing that Virginia will never contain the vast number of slaves given by the estimates for the end of the next hundred years, is that the impoverishment of the state will make it impossible to maintain them.\*

II. The practicability of greatly diminishing the evil of slavery, in Virginia. Are these ills incurable? Or if they can never be wholly remedied, may their disproportionate progress not be checked? May they not in fact be diminished?

Before we proceed to speak of any particular plan for effecting this, let us briefly recount the objects which are proposed to be accomplished by any such schemes. It is expected to afford sensible relief to Virginia by withdrawing her slave labour, and substituting free labour in its place, by the superior cheapness and efficiency of which an impulse will be given to the inertness of the principles of prosperity. It builds on the supposition that the State can afford the gradual withdrawal of her present labour, which it has been fully shown can never prove profitable to her,

\* We have omitted all mention of the Protective System as a source of ruin to Virginia. For the ills which we have specified, slavery seems to us an adequate cause.—It seems at least reasonable to attribute no ills to the Tariff except such as can be shown to have arisen since 1824. None of those enumerated have had so late an origin. The previous disabling of Virginia by slavery, has doubtless rendered her much more susceptible of injury from the errors of that system.



(though it may to other States,) and that she can afford it, because she has immense capabilities which could not fail to draw to her an adequate supply of productive labour, of a very different class, which would more than compensate her for the loss of the former. It counts on the hope of rearing in Virginia and inviting from abroad a yeomanry to till the large plantations of the rich proprietors, but much more to give new life to her husbandry, by the introduction of a large class of diligent faithful small farmers not interested to impoverish the soils further, but who would soon repair their present decay. It cherishes the hope of creating an extensive class of mechanics, and of tempting the establishment of manufactures; and, by a general revivification of the habits and spirit of the State, to build up cities, and render Virginia one of the most flourishing, as she is perhaps the most favoured, of all the Atlantic States. It is to be hoped that a fund for compensating the individual masters may be obtained, and thus that value in hand may be left, at the same time that the slaves are withdrawn; yet so thorough is the conviction of the ruinous character (in an economical view) of exclusive slave labour to Virginia, that it is believed, if the masters could be tempted to a gradual deportation of the slaves, without a farthing of compensation from government, there would be ultimate gain, and not loss, from it. The very last cases to which we would compare such gradual withdrawal, of what is in fact not a source of wealth, would be the expulsion of the eight hundred thousand Jews from Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella, or that of nearly a million of Moors under Philip III., or that of the Huguenots from France; in all which cases the persons expelled carried with them greater personal wealth in proportion to their number, finer skill, and more thriving habits than were left behind them, besides that in them, the expulsion was virtually immediate. Such comparisons, to say the least, are not supported by very cogent analogies.

We are fully persuaded ourselves that the emancipation of the slaves, and their transportation out of the limits of the State, will be the only mode of action on the subject which will be beneficial either to the blacks or the whites. *We* too, are of opinion that a general emancipation of the slaves, on the supposition of their remaining principally among us, would engender evils, the aggregate of which would be greater than all the evils of slavery, great as they unquestionably are.\* We shall therefore make no further allusion to this idea.

\* While this is true of African slaves in a community of white men of the European species, we are by no means persuaded that such would be the necessary result in a case of masters and bondsmen of the same race. Such we *know* is not the opinion of German statisticians, or the experiments of the last forty years in middle and eastern Europe. English travellers have treated of the Teutonic and Slavonic sections of Europe (the last are not to be studied rightly except through the medium of German books and the German language,) with a wrong headedness only equalled by their fashion of travel-writing in the unlucky United States; always except Russia's Tour in Germany.

We think that most of the arguments of the opponents of all action, on the ground of its futility, err from a mistake of the terms of the problem. The problem is not, with those projectors who offer no compensation to the masters, to prevail on Virginia to deprive herself in one day of one hundred millions of property, and to expel from her borders at once half a million of labouring hands. This would indeed be ruin to every class of interests, and would be an impossibility in terms. Still it is pretended that a gradual plan for the same object, no matter how slow and how wisely directed, though it operate not on the certain interests but the contingent, not on the actual but the potential, no matter though, by asking a small sacrifice to-day, it give ample opportunity, and put in the master's reach new means, of making the future sacrifices supportable, yet that it makes no difference; that it implies the total wreck of that amount of capital, and the loss of that amount of productive labour. Now, we humbly conceive that time is of the very essence of a problem like this. It is true that in any view of the case, some sacrifice would be involved, but we wholly reject the idea that it rises to that degree. On the other hand, when compensation is talked of as possible, it is not meant by any one that there is any fund in America which could purchase at once, at the actual price, all the slaves in Virginia and transport them. The proposition we mean to discuss is, to relieve the State of the annual increase of the blacks, with the hope of benefit in a double aspect: first, by keeping the black population stationary to check the *increase* of the evils and dangers; second, to prepare in this way a method of finally extirpating the great evil itself. But the pecuniary amount of this annual sacrifice, (supposing such sacrifice to be supported wholly by her own means, or to be gratuitous,) is by no means the measure of the loss to be suffered by Virginia. The loss to the wealth of the whole State from the abstraction annually of five or six thousand slaves, productive as they are of mischiefs of an economical nature, may not be at the time very great, and in a very few years may, by countervailing benefits, not otherwise to be obtained, be rendered merely nominal.

For ourselves, we desire to be distinctly understood to dissent from the opinion of Mr. Faulkner and others, *that property is the creature of civil society*, and from all the consequences deduced therefrom as means of arriving at the authority to deprive the master of his slave. Nor do we consider, however perfect the right of a community to abate nuisances, that the right of peremptory action on this subject can well be rested on that ground.—Nor yet do we consider that the requirement of the Bill of Rights of Virginia, that private property shall not be taken for public uses without due compensation, is to be evaded by the plea of public necessity: the provision of the Bill of Rights (which in this case is merely declaratory of the law of nature) is intended as well for exigencies as for common occasions, and is meant to



be equally sovereign over both. Necessity gives the public a right to take private property—this is undeniable; but under condition of compensation. If compensation cannot be made to-day, it is due to-morrow; if impossible for the present generation, it is just to impose a share of it on posterity; if it cannot be made in full measure, it is at least due so far as it can be made. This we take to be the rationale of the operation of the right of necessity. We will tell these gentlemen, that there is one ground, and only one, which could ever be a logical justification (we do not speak of its moral propriety) for peremptorily depriving the master of his slaves without compensation: any such bill must make its own defence by reciting, in its preamble, that the claim of property in slaves is unfounded. But we, for our part, earnestly hope that no one may ever think any such law expedient.

We also decline assenting to the opinion of some of the abolitionists, that, though the master's right over his living slaves should be conceded, yet he has no claim of property in the unborn, for the reason that there can be no property in a thing not *in esse*. This position is wholly untenable under any jurisprudence. All systems lay it down that there may be a present right to a future interest: it is potential if not actual, and is many times saleable for a valuable consideration. The civilians treat the increase of slaves as precisely on the footing of the fruits of any other *thing*. Let it be avowed, then, that the State has only a right to do with the future increase what it has a right to do with the living slaves. We do agree, however, that the public mind will be much more ready to yield to a plan, which is to begin its operation with the children yet to be born, than if it began with the slaves now existing. The difference between the potential value of these contingent births and the value of actual lives, it is superfluous to say, is very great. Mr. Jefferson had the true view of it, when he said, the sacrifice would not be felt to be very great, being the surrender "of an object which they have never yet known or counted as part of their property."

Having made these disclaimers, we venture to lay down some principles of our own. First, it is to be assumed that no human being has an abstract right to hold another in a state of perpetual involuntary bondage, much less with a descending power over the posterity of that other. It is quite impossible to conceive of any rational being's holding the contrary of this proposition. No two men could look each other in the face and assert it. This truth being postulated, its proper use is not to lay it aside and never let it be remembered again in the course of an argument on the subject of abolition. Our adversaries in words universally admit it as readily as we demand its acknowledgment. But almost the whole train of their reasoning involves a total forgetfulness of it. The true use of it is to introduce the element of moral duty into the problem of the economist, and to furnish the *motif* of virtue, as one of the ways and means in solving the



complication of difficulties, which appear to obstruct all the plans of abolition that can be proposed. While, then, we promised not to claim a sacrifice to mere abstract justice, we can by no means consent to its being wholly cast out of view. We hope to be pardoned for adding here, that should Dr. Whateley ever have a clever disciple in logic in America, we trust he will favour us with a treatise on the true functions of general truths in moral reasoning. We really believe that there are some politicians in our country, who could be persuaded to define abstract principles, to be propositions which are true in terms, but false in every conceivable instance of their application! Second, we admit, nay we will maintain against any adversary, the innocence of slaveholding, under present circumstances, in Virginia. But it is with this qualification: we have always held the opinion that almost every master in Virginia believed it his duty to emancipate his slaves, whenever he was convinced that it could be done to the advantage of the slave, and without greater injury to the master than is implied in the continuance of the bondage. Such we still believe to be the general sentiment there. If there be a single owner who neither hopes that, in some future day, this occasion may occur to him or his posterity, nor intends should it occur to avail himself of it, then we must confess that we cannot hold his sentiment to be entirely innocent. We defy contradiction when we say that in Virginia, from the year 1776 down to 1832, the prevalent sentiment ever has been that slavery was not entailed on the State forever. None of her economists has ever defended the abstract right over the slaves, none has ever been willing to believe in the perpetuity of slavery, as far as we know, except that Mr. Giles has expressed in his golden casket (*mons anon movendo*) certain opinions which are, it must be admitted, incompatible with the future possibility of renouncing the dominion over them. Third, we admit that slavery does not exist in Virginia in any thing like the rigour which some misguided persons connect with the very idea of slavery. An inhuman master is rare, and cruelty to slaves is as little habitual as other crimes. But if an anti-abolitionist who regards domestic slavery as the optimum among good institutions, while asserting the benign and sacred character of the relation of master and slave as observed in Virginia, should boast that Virginia is "in fact a *negro raising* State for other States," and that "she produces enough for her own supply and six thousand for sale," we must say that this is a material subtraction from the truth of his picture of the sanctity of the relation. It would be well to recall it and thrust it out of view.

We proceed now to speak of the practicability of devising some plan for the relief of the State. One main point to be gained is this: that the people of Virginia be impressed with a thorough conviction of the exceeding desirableness and the urgent necessity of *doing something promptly*. The great triumph will be

when, on the fullest view of the present interests, moral and economical, of this generation, and of its duty to the posterity who are to inherit the "fee simple" of Virginia, there shall be, in the minds of a great majority, the clear and unalterable opinion that slavery is not a source of prosperity to her, and that it will not do for this generation to attempt nothing to bring about a change.

Another great point is, *that some plan be adopted with the sanction of the State.* It is of vastly more importance to the final deliverance of the State, that a mode be selected and come forth to the world with the crowning sanction of the State, than it is what that mode may be. For, it is certain that the public opinion, thus solemnly announced, will be an instrument for the execution of the plan, the power of which we cannot exaggerate to ourselves. The public once predisposed to its success, half the task is done. This brings us at once to the consideration of the first among our ways and means for diminishing the evils of slavery: the moral elements which will be at work for its accomplishment. These elements are powers as well known in political economy as others which seem more substantial. We utterly protest against this question being argued as if the emancipation were in fact a mere money speculation, and the success of the adopted plan were to rise and fall according as its pecuniary temptations were greater or less than those from some other accidental quarter—as if there were no other reasons likely to have the slightest effect on the master, but such as went to show that he was thereby to make a good bargain, so far as his poor, circumscribed, present and personal interest was concerned. It will be monstrous indeed, if, in a problem like the present, of which the very terms are instinct with moral forces, a calculator should leave wholly out of his estimate of means of working it, the value of a little virtue, a slight sense of justice, and a grain of common honesty, as agents. It is most true that we too propose to advance the interests of those who now hold slaves, and believe that this will be effectually done by some radical plan of emancipation: but it is by the help of the moral considerations that the masters must be led to look on their higher and ultimate interests as worthy of some sacrifice of present inferior interests. We readily assent to the opinion that the enthusiasm of abstract virtue is not the true temper in which a great work, like the present, should be undertaken, or carried on; and we cannot more distinctly express our views on the matter, than by citing the following passage from the *African Repository* of September 1827:

"This is not the age of enthusiasm: far from it. Too large a part of the talent of the age is devoted to caricature, to ridicule; and what is more, too large a part of the good sense and good learning of the day is in the hands of those who look for the ludicrous part of every plan, by much too large to permit the public mind to be heated with unnecessary zeal, even in the best cause, or to uphold for a long time any grave farce. It is the age of practical reason, of great moral truths rigidly established by cool practical experiment, the age which has relieved human nature from the apprehension that any of the baneful evils in society are sealed and fated on us by our own imbecility, by proofs which are intended for the most plodding, the most determined enemies of novelty. Enthusiasm is not fit to be trusted with any great



scheme, unsteady, blind, and indiscriminating as it is. The most anxious zealot is little wise who would not rather trust his cherished plans to that state of devotion to principle so naturally rising up in this age, which, tempered by prudence and restrained by fear of the charge of absurdity, takes its course calm, collected, and like the cloud of the poet, 'moveth altogether, if it move at all.' Public opinion and public feeling, when thus informed, are indeed the voice of God."

But we must be understood to be far from deeming lightly of the power of philanthropy. A senator from South Carolina once said with much piquancy, that "benevolence somehow was rather an unsuccessful adventure in the south." There, as elsewhere, avarice and ambition seem to come of a healthier stock, and last their day and generation: but do not let us libel poor nature in the south so scandalously as to suppose that when the disinterested feelings are in question, "there is no throb under the left breast," as Persius has it. It was hitherto said that avarice has been more successfully pelted by the satirists than any other passion; but we doubt if philanthropy has not had quite a sufficient share of worrying. We do not love to see any one succeed in discrediting all reliance on philanthropy. Whether philanthropy has ever proved competent to carry through, unassisted, any one great work, matters very little: it is happily the fact that it rarely fails of commanding a thousand auxiliary interests to lend it subsidy. But among the successful agents in any undertaking for meliorating the condition of human life, one of the chief, and that which could least be spared, will always, as hitherto, prove to be those feelings which are founded in sympathy for others, and in a sense of duty. "Many," says an English moralist with great force; "are the modes of evil—many the scenes of human suffering; but if the general condition of man is ever to be ameliorated, it can only be through the medium of belief in human virtue." But even suppose that all change in the world is to be effected merely by the triumph of one sort of interest over another. What then? We need but ask of our theorists of human nature, that we be permitted to believe that man's selfishness is distinguished from that of the brutes by a power of large discourse in his calculations; that he is capable of balancing a contingent interest against one certain, a future interest against a present; that he is capable of weighing one species of valuable interest, such as money, against another such as the acquisition of moral habits which would prove in their turn more profitable; that he is capable of the conception that individual interest is often best promoted by generosity to one's country; and that it is one of the commonest of human propensities to be prodigal of wealth; of ease, and of life, for the welfare or the honour of one's country, so that the age which is to come after may not receive an inheritance profaned by hereditary disgrace. Give us these capacities in human nature, and upon them we will build you up a hope for the noblest undertakings. But were we to suppose a large body of men elevated to this *enlightened pitch of self-interest*, and united for some great pur-



pose, we much fear that we should be parasitical enough to offer them the adulation of ascribing to them a spirit a little more disembodied than selfishness—"of the earth, earthy." If it be meant to assert, that the immediate and personal interests are the only safe reliances in any problem of human action, we boldly deny the assertion. Remote, prospective interests have often been the dominant motives over a whole nation. But the labours of mere philanthropy have been, in fact, invaluable, and when combined with the holy impulse of conscience, it has proved in our own day, that it is capable of success in enterprises of the vastest scope, and beset with the most obstinate difficulties.

By the aid of these moral elements, we are able to dissipate the apprehension which has been expressed by some, lest, even if the number of five or six thousand were annually deported, it should be found that the operation proved wholly nugatory, *under the stimulated influence of the spring of population*. Some have imagined, that, if government were possessed of means to compensate the masters, at the present average price of slaves, the desire of government to purchase would elevate the price beyond the natural value, and that consequently the *raising* of them would become an object of primary importance throughout the State, thus inducing a general resort to every means of rendering the race more prolific. It might be answered, first, that to those who know the state of things in this respect in Virginia, it would seem not easy, even for Euler himself, to imagine more liberal encouragement than is at present afforded to the blacks. Besides, it by no means appears that the best way to succeed in giving a perfect elasticity (a property in practical mechanics hitherto wanting) to this delicate spring, would be to devise special plans for its improvement. Any increased propensity to promiscuous intercourse would of course not add very much to the production. But all this objection is futile in the extreme. If the day is ever to arrive when a bill is to pass the Virginia Legislature for the purchase and deportation of the annual surplus, it will naturally be an expression of the sentiments of the State, that slavery is an evil to the commonwealth. No one will thank the Legislature for passing a bill through the forms under favour of accidental circumstances, whereby the public sentiment is not embodied, and a large majority of the citizens pledged to a hearty co-operation in its execution. Surely we must be pardoned for saying that we shall on no account believe that every scheme which ingenious cupidity can contrive to render its operation nugatory, will be unscrupulously resorted to throughout the State. That some slaveholders would avail themselves of the most immoral means of encouraging the spring of population, and thus *pro tanto* thwart the law, may of course be expected, but never that such shifts would be the general resort.\* It is

\* It is no reply to this to say that such an abolition bill will only pass by being forced on eastern Virginia by the valley and western Virginia. The whole argument

superfluous to add, that such a moral phenomenon would itself point out the remedy, which would be found in a different tone of legislation.

While we are on this head, (the probability of such a law's proving nugatory,) we may notice another objection. It has been said, as we have already noticed, that Virginia produces enough slaves for her own supply, and six thousand for sale. It may be subjoined to that statement, that, if motives of humanity did not prevent many masters from selling negroes who could most advantageously be spared, she would be able to sell five times that number, were there purchasers for them. Now, suppose the government of Virginia enters the slave market resolved to purchase six thousand for emancipation and deportation, is it not evident, they say, that it must overbid the southern slave trader, and thus take the very slaves who would have gone to the south? Not in the least likely. The average estimate of \$200 per head, has been made under the stimulus of a large demand from the south, as great as it is ever likely to be hereafter, (doubtless greater,) and of the competition of slave traders in every parish. The price of slaves in Virginia has always been regulated more by foreign demand (of late years, entirely regulated by it) than by the home value. In this situation of things, if a new buyer were to come into the market (we blush to use these words as applied to the operation of the government under the beneficent law of which we are speaking) resolved to buy at any cost every slave whom any owner might be desirous of selling, it is true that the slaves who would else have been sent to the south, would, among the rest, fall into his hands. But were our new buyer only resolved to purchase as many as six thousand, and the southern traders were desirous of buying six thousand more, it would only be for the former to wait till the demand of the latter was supplied, and then buy his own number; for, as soon as the inducement of the not inhuman destination of the slaves, who might be sold to the new buyer, had been brought into play, we dare say that Virginia would willingly, as she well could, spare twelve thousand per annum at the same price. This shows at once, that as long as the demand exists in the south, the due quota can be annually furnished from Virginia, and that this drain for the relief of Virginia will not *in this way* be stopped. Thus much to show that putting money into the hands of the State, to purchase from willing masters, would not at least prove nugatory by merely enabling the State—*actum agere*—to buy the very slaves, none other, who would otherwise have departed

assumes that the State has a fair compensation to offer to the master; for the quickening of the *spring* is to be occasioned by a great market demand. When compensation becomes possible, the east will be as willing to yield as the west. Moreover, in any form of abolition, it is a woful delusion to suppose that the parties for and against the movement will be all the non-slaveholders on the one side, and all the slaveholders on the other. Did we not think it indecent to speak of divisions in the State, we would say we have entire reliance on middle Virginia, as well as the valley and the west.

from the State. The fund will manifestly act as auxiliary to the operations of the southern traders, and in the precise measure of its magnitude will extend additional relief to the overburdened State. It is not irrational to suppose, if the State were to fix a fair maximum price, beyond which it would not buy, that it would find many more slaves offered at that price than it could yearly take, and thus masters would come to offer them at even lower than the average price. Should, unhappily for Virginia, (for however mortifying it is, this outlet is her only safety valve at present) the southern markets ever be closed by the legislation of the southern States, then we may indeed thank the supposed fund for supplying their place. If no substitute for that outlet be then found, the present sources of danger and ruin are frightfully increased indeed!

We confess that we count largely on the operation of the moral elements, to induce many masters to surrender their slaves voluntarily and gratuitously, if the State would provide the means of colonizing them out of the United States. In the year 1816, when slave labour was infinitely more profitable than it is now, as all know from the inflated prices of tobacco, &c., &c., Mr. Randolph of Roanoke, who is, perhaps, better qualified to speak for the slaveholders of Virginia than any other man, said: "if a place could be provided for their reception and a mode of sending them hence, there were hundreds, nay thousands, who would by manumitting their slaves, relieve themselves from the cares attendant on their possession." We repeat most emphatically the declaration of Gen. Brodnax, and add that there can be no mistake in asserting that "there would be again another class, (he had already heard of many) while they could not afford to sacrifice the entire value of their slaves, would cheerfully compromise with the State for half of their value."

It is not denied by us, too, that the adoption of some plan with the sanction of the State will have the moral effect (not to excite a feeling of insecurity and apprehension as to this kind of property, and so incline the owners to dispose of it at a loss)—but to weaken the almost exclusive attachment of the master to this species of property, to make him cast about for means of making his other resources more available, and to set him upon certain broad and liberal calculations, whereby he may satisfy himself that more prosperous and more valuable interests may be had in exchange for this property. In the beginning, and for several years, there would, we do not doubt, be as many furnished for transportation (exclusive of the present free blacks) as would be wanted, without any cost for their freedom; and after the experiment of colonizing a large number annually is fairly tried with success, then we would draw to an almost unlimited amount on this bank of humanity without fear of protest.

Will any one say that the inefficiency of moral restraints to check commercial cupidity, is shown in the impossibility of



checking the African slave trade? We reply, that we know that this impossibility was urged as one of the best reasons against its prohibition by laws in England and other countries; but that it was clearly wise nevertheless to prohibit it, for the following if for no other reason: the law would effectually prevent all men who were not desperately depraved from lending their future countenance to it. It is known that men like the excellent Mr. Newton of Olney were owners of slave ships—the public voice of Christian England once expressed, such men and all others with a single spark of virtue, abjured it for ever, and left it to pirates alone. Besides, even as to this example, we are content to say, that in America, with a coast the most tempting in the world to smugglers, yet since 1808 we are not aware that attempts have been made to violate the laws against the introduction of slaves from Africa. Indeed we hope that Edwards's apprehension, that their importation into the West Indies could never be stopped, has not proved altogether just as to the British possessions.

But it is time to proceed to the other means, on which we rely, for the liberation of Virginia from her exigency, and in so doing, to unfold more distinctly what practicable mode of action there is. Once for all, we declare that we have, however, no confidence in any plan except under condition that it be accompanied with the public favour: if the people of Virginia really desire relief from their slaves, we believe most solemnly that it can be obtained without ruinous consequences to themselves. Touching the specific project of Mr. T. J. Randolph, we refer to what we have already cursorily said, both as to the reasoning by which some have supported it, and as to the merit of the conception of beginning with the after born. We believe that means may be found to colonize the annual surplus of the slaves of Virginia, and to purchase such a portion of that surplus as it may be necessary to purchase.

The annual increase of slaves in Virginia (leaving out of view the 6000 supposed to be taken off to the southern markets) is less than 5000. If this number of slaves be valued at the average of 200 dollars per head, the sum necessary to purchase them will be about a million of dollars. To defray the expense of their deportation to Africa and subsistence there for some months will, on the satisfactory calculation of Mr. Mathew Carey, to which we must refer, at 25 dollars per head for adults and children, require 125,000 dollars—add to which the cost of deportation of 1200 free blacks (their annual increase,) 30,000 dollars, and we have the sum of 150,000 dollars. That the State of Virginia has no possible means of purchasing 5000 slaves *per annum* is obvious. But were the entire cost that of transportation only, 150,000 dollars, we should insist that the Legislature take it into serious consideration how far that expense exceeds its means. In any event, our adversaries will allow us to set down the

item of transportation to the charge of the State: if this be all, it is to offer no insurmountable embarrassment. Perhaps it may be thought best to deport the free negroes first, and then the whole expense is that of transportation. Where, however, shall we find that greater fund which will presently be needed for the purchase of the surplus of the slaves, and before long for the purchase of a part of the capital number? There is not far off a fund to which we believe our eyes may be turned. We have come to the conclusion that such a fund is the proceeds of the public lands in the Treasury of the General Government; and we do now invite the friends of the removal and colonization of the negroes to fix hereafter their thoughts and to press their pretensions on this fund. The annual income to government from the public lands is now estimated at three millions. Let one-third of this amount be demanded for this object, *to be under the entire management of the State authorities.*

In coincidence with the known opinion of Virginia, we are not willing to demand a simple appropriation of money from Congress. But we are inclined to think, that an appropriation from the receipts of the public lands would not be liable to the constitutional objection, which would forbid a grant of money raised by taxes. The public lands belong to the United States in absolute ownership; as to that part of the public domain obtained by cession from the States themselves, it will be found that the Acts of Cession uniformly declare that the territory is given "as a common fund for the use and benefit" of the United States. Such are the words of the Acts of Virginia, New-York, and Georgia. The grants of the two former were made during the time of the old Confederation; of the latter, subsequently. In the Constitution of the United States it is provided that "Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States." This certainly seems to import a complete right to grant the public lands, under the sole condition that it shall be faithfully and *bona fide* for the common use and benefit. And we are free to confess, that we should regard the temporary appropriation of the proceeds of the public lands, to one embodied purpose that might be said to come up to the definition "for the common use and benefit" of all the States, as a more faithful execution of the condition, than the distribution of the same to the States for application to any purpose in their discretion. The lands have hitherto been pledged for the public debt, but are soon to be released. It will then remain a question, whether the removal of the negroes deserves to be termed a measure demanded for the common benefit of the United States? We have an unfeigned respect for constitutional scruples, but we are not ambitious ourselves of entertaining more scruples than Mr. Madison. Let us hear then what that greatest living authority says upon the subject, in his letter to Mr. Gurley, of December last:—

"In contemplating the pecuniary resources needed for the removal of such a number to a great distance, my thoughts and hopes have been long turned to the rich fund presented in the western lands of the nation, which will soon entirely cease to be under a pledge for another object. The great one in question is truly of a national character, and it is known that distinguished patriots not dwelling in slave-holding States have viewed the object in that light, and would be willing to let the national domain be a resource in effecting it. Should it be remarked that the States, though all may be interested in relieving our country from the coloured population, are not equally so; it is but fair to recollect, that the sections most to be benefitted are those whose cessions created the fund to be disposed of. I am aware of the constitutional obstacle which has presented itself; but if the general will should be reconciled to an application of the territorial fund to the removal of the coloured population, a grant to Congress of the necessary authority could be carried, with little delay, through the forms of the Constitution."

Before any one condemns us for looseness of construction of the Constitution, we beg further that he will read Mr. Jefferson's letter to Mr. Sparks, (vol. iv. p. 388-391.): we adopt all the qualifications therein mentioned.

Judge Marshall most properly suggests that the objection, in a political view, to the application of this ample fund, is very much lessened, in his estimation, by the fact that our lands are becoming an object for which the States are to scramble, and which threatens to sow the seeds of discord among us, instead of being what they might be—a source of national wealth.

A great part of the proceeds of the public domain once appropriated to this object, there would soon be found no insurmountable difficulty in the removal of the necessary number in Virginia. But it is said that were Congress disposed to give a million annually for the specific object of the removal of the slaves, it would feel bound to bestow it proportionally on all the slave-holding States, or if all be not inclined to receive it, then on those which would be. We answer, that, if Congress should consent to pledge a certain share of the revenue from the lands for the purchase and removal (under the laws of the States) of the slaves of the United States, we have no doubt it would be thought wise to begin with the effectual relief of the greatest sufferer first. A minute's attention to the following statement of General Brodnax will show the immense claims of Virginia.

"The State of Virginia contains, by the last census, less than one fifteenth part of the whole *white* population of the United States; it contains *more* than one seventh of the free negroes; and it possesses between a fourth and a fifth of all the *slaves* in the Union.

"Virginia has a greater number of slaves than any other State in the Union—and more than Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee, all put together; and more than four times as many as either of them. Louisiana and South Carolina are the only States in which the slaves are more numerous than the white population; and Virginia has more slaves, without estimating her great and unfortunate proportion of free persons of colour, than both these States put together. Nay, one half of the State, that which lies on the east of the Blue Ridge of Mountains, itself contains nearly as many."

But if Congress should decline to grant from this fund for the specific purpose of the removal of the blacks, and prefer to distribute among the States the portion of money severally assignable to them, let such portion as would fall to Virginia be earn-



estly claimed of the Legislature for this object. The annual receipt of between two and three hundred thousand dollars, which Mr. Clay's bill (limited to five years' duration) would assign to her, would not be adequate for compensating masters on the foregoing plan, but it might suffice for doing an immense deal of good on the plan in Mr. Jefferson's letter to Mr. Sparks, the *purchase of the children* at a small but just price, the children to be disposed of either according to the particulars of that plan, or under any other plan which might be speedier, and less burdensome to the persons to be charged with rearing them.

We believe that before half a million of blacks were conveyed to Africa, there would not remain a master obstinately resolved to retain his slaves, except in the most southern and south-western States, where slave labour is next to essential (we hope not absolutely) for the cultivation of the good lands!

We exhort the people of Virginia then, first to seek aid from their own Legislature to the extent it can be afforded; second, to insist on the passage of permanent laws going as far in the subject as public opinion will justify; and third, to assert their claims to a share of the proceeds of the public lands. Let it not, by her fastidiousness, be made true, that she ceded an empire to the General Government, under a virtual condition that she alone was to derive no benefit from it.

Suppose then means to be thus found to defray the expense of emancipating and transporting them to some other country, the next question is, where a suitable asylum may be found to which to convey them? We answer, that Africa affords the most eligible situation for such an asylum, and that we hope Virginia would avail herself of the noble beginning which has been made by the American Colonization Society at Liberia. We have thus reached our third division, in which we design to say,

III. A few preliminary words on the position of the Colonization Society with reference to the Virginia question, and then to show the possibility of finding a refuge for the blacks in Africa.

Justice to the Society demands that it should be distinctly stated, that it has no share whatever in the abolition question. Its whole sphere of operations is voluntary and peaceful; it is no propagandist of agitating opinions. It has its own private, independent course marked out, which it will pursue, though the abolition of slavery should never be mentioned again in any legislature. Let no adversary of abolition charge on it the odium (since with some it is odium) of that discussion any where. It has confined itself in all sincerity to the removal of free persons of colour (who may desire the same) to Africa, and to the preparation of means for the reception there of such slaves as might be manumitted by their masters under the laws of the States.—Except by the peaceful and modest persuasive of the practicability of its scheme, (now made manifest,) and the certainty of its

easy adaptation to the largest possible demand, it has not had, and never will have any agency in creating an inclination to abolition. All such action, too, will plainly pass far beyond the limits of the Society's views. Indeed, in the midst of all the doubts and fears encompassing that subject, how naturally might both of the parties which contest it, turn their thoughts to that Society! How soothing after the agitation of the momentous opinions which separate them from each other, is the invitation to peaceful concert which it holds out to them! In the plan of this Society they can both find large room for the exercise of the patriotism they both boast. It may claim the ardent co-operation of persons of both opinions on the subject of abolition, without expecting those of either opinion to violate in the least their own consistency. Popular writers in South Carolina formerly declared that the Society would become the nucleus for all the mischievous incendiaries through the United States—*now*, it can with ease be demonstrated, that on a subject about which the public mind neither can, nor will be indifferent, the only absolutely certain security against intemperance and rashness, is to be found in the scheme of that Society. The incendiaries find it not at all suited to their taste. The Society was once denounced as hostile to the interests of the slave-holding States, and made up of meddling theorists, ignorant of the evil they sought to remedy:—*now*, it begins to be noted that it originated out of the passage, at different periods, of resolutions by the Virginia Legislature, projecting the identical scheme which the Society was established to promote. Formerly it was declared that the Society tampered with the public safety: what is the fact? Why that the very first mention of an American colony of emancipated negroes in Africa, was made in the Virginia Assembly, at a date which we beg every one to notice—it was in 1801. A plan for the acquisition of lands in Africa, for this purpose, was the result of the anxious secret sessions of the Assembly immediately subsequent to the rebellion of Gabriel! In a word, it may be made manifest, that it is not only a safe, a wise, a practicable scheme, but that it was originally the deliberate policy of slave-holders, and is peculiarly fitted as a relief from exigencies of an alarming nature.—Give it then but the right to impute to any one a single sentiment of patriotism in the range of the subject of slavery; give it but a concession of one right idea in that man's reasoning on the probable future career of Virginia, and the society may plant the foot of its rhetoric and its logic on these, so as to move the whole mass of his sentiments and opinions into subjection to itself.

The history of the first suggestions about the expediency of a colony on the coast of Africa is briefly told. In the last century it was distinctly proposed by several individuals, and was even talked of, it is believed, in the Virginia Assembly. But its chief events are the resolutions of the sessions of that body in 1801–3, when the governor was desired to open a correspondence with



the president, on the means of finding an asylum in the European colonies already established, or of purchasing a suitable territory ; and the passage of similar resolutions in 1816, the correspondence under the former having proved fruitless. The direct object of these two attempts was the establishment of a colony under the proprietorship and dominion of Virginia, or of the United States. It was after this last attempt that it was suggested by certain philanthropists, among whom Dr. Finley and Mr. Caldwell were most conspicuous, that the benevolent project would take a more vigorous beginning, and succeed better under the control of a private society, and thereupon the present Society was instituted at Washington, as the more convenient agent in the prosecution of the conception of the Virginia Assembly.

The fixed object of the labours of the Society was at once declared to be the removal to Africa of the free blacks, with their own consent, and of such blacks, then slaves, as might after that time be set free, under the laws of the States. Were there no other object in view but the providing a foreign place of refuge for the existing class of free negroes, we are sure that that of itself would be found an end quite worthy of the labours of a Society spread over the whole country ; and this chiefly as a measure of police. So pernicious a class, (we admit many honourable exceptions,) the source of so much vice and the prey of so much misery, so beset with an inaptitude to habits of virtue, so tempted to petty misdemeanors and so subject to be dragged into crime ; a class so seemingly born for the rolls of vagrancy and the calendar of felonies, exists no where perhaps in the world. No wise government can, for a moment, regard the existence of such a class without uneasiness. We admit that the whites are under a sacred duty to them : one of two things must be done. Either their condition must be radically changed, and bettered, by the grant of such privileges in this country as may induce them to become useful citizens, or they must be prevailed on to accept elsewhere a home under a sky of more friendly influences. That the whites in the slave-holding States should ever consent to grant them here enough privileges to be a sufficient temptation to them to reform the character of their *caste*, is wholly improbable and unreasonable. It is true that in the domestic police of the West Indies, where they are highly privileged, it is thought they serve as a barrier class between the masters and slaves, to protect the masters ; but were we to give a list of their privileges there, it would go high to create a revulsion in the mind of the reader from all the humanity he at present feels towards the *caste*. The approach to equal rights with the whites, in some of the non-slave-holding States, has indisputably made them a more pestilent population in those States than elsewhere. In a memorial prepared by the Pennsylvania Colonization Society and presented to the Legislature of that State three or four years ago, (referred to in an earlier number of this journal,) it is stated that of



the whole population of Pennsylvania, then estimated at 1,200,000; about 40,000 or one thirtieth are people of colour; and the following statement taken from the records of the State Penitentiary is then given: "in 1826, of 296 convicted and brought to the Philadelphia prison, 117 were coloured: being nearly in the ratio of 3 to 7. Had the number of coloured convicts been proportional to the coloured population of the State, there would have been but 6 instead of 117. The average of the last seven years proves a similar disproportion." Nothing short of complete citizenship can ever elevate them: but the danger of the example to our slaves is an insuperable barrier to this in the slave-holding States, and the strong disgust of nature every where absolutely forbids the thought in America. Elsewhere then, they must seek the advancement of their degraded condition. Their emigration from one State to another, already restricted, may one day be forbidden, and it is almost to be hoped it may. When once transferred to another land where their freedom is no longer maimed and their privileges no longer ineffectual, they prove as fair subjects of moral and social discipline as the citizens of any government.

There is however another branch of the Society's plan. Every one will observe how benignant and void of offence this first part of it is. The second, while it is of vaster compass, is equally harmless. It next fixes its view on such slaves as may be voluntarily manumitted by their masters under the temptation of an opportunity to have them removed out of the United States, and most munificently provided for, on another soil. We think the Society is most deeply indebted to Mr. Archer, for the support he lent it last winter, at its anniversary meeting. He may rest assured that he has not mistaken the neutral character of the Society in the midst of the troubled opinions of the times: that *it* attacks no man's conventional rights, and tramples on no pardonable prejudices. It waits with patience the slow ripening of public opinion; it prepares with quiet diligence a reservoir for the voluntary outpourings of individual patriotism, and gathers up the random impulses of States and citizens into a concentrated impetus. Legislatures may speak with the power of law, and statesmen may by their courageous eloquence hurry on the day of relief, but the most benign agent in behalf of master and slave will be acknowledged to be the unobtrusive Colonization Society to which they will all turn in the moment of their success. In the end, that Institution shall have the benedictions of all, for it will have shown that "they also serve, who only stand and wait." Such (we have thought necessary to say,) is the position of the Society with reference to the abolition question. It now only remains to see whether Virginia can avail herself of the labours of the Society. The following details are, of course, familiar to every one who has given much attention to the reports of the Society; but in the hope that these pages may meet the eye of some who

are yet unacquainted with the facts, we shall make a simple recital of some of them.

We will suppose every one persuaded that some point on the African coast is the best position for an asylum for the emancipated blacks. We will suppose too, that the appropriateness of our making to Africa herself a tribute of the reparation which we design to render to humanity, is not merely a fanciful consideration. Although we are ready to admit that, should it seem advisable hereafter, other places in Africa or America may also be selected for colonizing them, we presume the policy of planting the first and largest colony in Africa will be conceded. There it will be distant enough (as it should be) from all possibility of intrusion from the whites; there it need neither dread the jealousy of civilized governments, nor can it become itself, when grown to be a powerful nation, in any manner dangerous to the peace of the United States. To combine these qualities, we think no settlement of blacks can be planted any where at less expense, or in a happier position than at Liberia.

The colony of Liberia extends about two hundred and eighty miles along the coast, and from twenty to thirty inland. It lies between 4 deg. 30 min. and 7 deg. north latitude. This proximity to the equator by no means subjects it to a torrid climate; on the contrary, the climate is mild and uniform, the thermometer never being lower than 68 deg., nor higher than 88 deg., save perhaps one day in the season, when it has been known to rise to 91 deg. To the health of the colony the managers have directed their chief thoughts, and they express confidently the opinion that people of colour from most of the southern States will experience no serious injury from the African climate, and that such persons from any section of the United States will soon be able to settle on the elevated lands of the interior, where there exist, it is believed, no special causes of disease. The process of acclimation is gentle, fatal to comparatively few. The character of that climate, we are assured by those who know it best, is not well understood in other countries. Fatal as it may be to whites, its inhabitants are as robust, as healthy, as long-lived to say the least, as those of any other country. Nothing like an epidemic has ever appeared in Liberia, nor is it learned from the natives that the calamity of a sweeping sickness ever yet visited this part of the continent. The managers have of late sent out experienced physicians, supplies of medicines, appropriated a fund for the erection of a hospital, and taken every measure which experience has suggested. The residents of Liberia declare that "a more fertile soil, and a more productive country, so far as it is cultivated, there is not on the face of the earth. Its hills and plains are covered with a verdure that never fades: the productions of nature keep on in their growth through all the seasons of the year. Even the natives of the country, almost without farming utensils, without skill and with very little labour, make more grain and vegetables than they

can consume, and often more than they can sell." All the best products of the tropics, with many others which are favourites in temperate countries, flourish either spontaneously or under moderate labour. From the testimony of Englishmen we are assured that "the character of these industrious colonists is exceedingly correct and moral; their minds strongly impressed with religious feelings; their manners serious and decorous, and their domestic habits remarkably neat and comfortable." A sum of money has recently been given by a gentleman of New York to found a high school there. A distinguished British naval officer has recently published his conviction, that the success which has attended the American colony in Africa is a complete proof that such experiments are not of a fanciful, or impracticable nature. Already are there about 2400 inhabitants in Liberia, of whom, (we have often been assured by voyagers thither,) not one repines at his condition, or would consent to return to live in America. Preparations are on foot for a vastly increased body of settlers. It may be satisfactory to compare the planting of Liberia with that of Jamestown. In the year 1624, after more than 150,000 pounds sterling had been expended, and more than 9,000 persons had been sent from England, its population did not exceed 1800 persons. From tables given in Mr. Jefferson's Notes, it appears that, after several fluctuations, sometimes rising as high as 400 and again sinking as low as 60, the whole number in 1618 (the eleventh year of the settlement) was only 600. So far then as the trial of the experiment of a negro colony was concerned, this is success—the most brilliant success. Those who were fearful of it from the analogy of the failure of Sierra Leone (a most remarkable instance certainly in the history of British enterprise, which, above all things, has succeeded in planting foreign colonies) may now dismiss all fear. The American negro, unchanged by the residence of generations in America, has proved that in the native latitude of his ancestors he is for the first time at home, and, in the words of the same British officer, "the complete success of this colony is a proof that negroes are, by proper care and attention, as susceptible of the habits of industry and the improvements of social life, as any other race of human beings." And this is our answer to all the theorizing on the principle of idleness being essentially dominant in the negro; for the present settlers can hardly be said to be picked men.

No one has been so irrational as to suppose that the business of planting colonies is an easy thing. We are not blind to the lessons that the many disastrous adventures in it have left in history. The fatal errors which ruined the Duke de Choiseul's great expedition to Kourou, when 1000 or 1200 men, very much unprovided with the most common necessities, and at the most rainy and unhealthy season, were sent out at once to people the immense deserts of French Guiana, are not very likely to be incurred to-day. The most cautious and wary trial of the seasons, climate, soil, &c., of Liberia, and of the fitness of negroes for the



discipline of laws, has first been made; repeated experiments have shown what sort of discipline must be used, what means each emigrant must bring with him, and what habits he must be expected to adopt when arrived, to prevent his bringing the burden of pauperism on the colony. The present settlement virtually supports itself: the introduction of new settlers involves all the expense to the Society. This may fairly be expected to be always the case. All the uncertainties relative to a country so different from our own, and so distant, have been explored by forerunners: we know what are the real dangers to be guarded against, and are not to be alarmed by unfounded imaginations. Besides, all the circumstances connected with the planting of colonies are not disadvantageous: Adam Smith, with his usual wisdom remarks, that the colony of a civilized nation which takes possession of a waste country, for many causes is apt to advance more rapidly to wealth and greatness than any other human society. Nay, we do know that failure is not the certain issue even under the most sinister auspices. It was a fine idea of Mr. E. Everett's, when describing the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth from the *May Flower*, to suppose that a reader were to shut up the book after seeing this fated company debark, and conjecture the result: how soon and how naturally the political economist would have imagined their destruction! Yet all calculations were baffled, and the sons of those Pilgrims yet flourish in that bleak and stony region, with a prosperity healthier than the Saturnian earth itself ever gave. But, indeed, the political economist who should do Liberia the justice to survey it well, would pronounce that this colony cannot fail—every thing is in its favour, if there be but prudence.

Still, the adversaries of abolition, incredulous, deny that the successful experiment of a small colony of American negroes affords sufficient grounds for the belief that it can be expanded into a populous State; that by the admission of the Society itself its colony could not now receive the annual addition of 6000 without utter destruction, and that the area of the colonial territory could contain but a small part of the slave population of the United States. On the subject of these objections, we have taken means to procure the most authentic information of the views of the leading friends of the colony. The following particulars are so judicious and succinct that we give them in their original form: they are from the *best source*.

"I have not a doubt that the Colony of Liberia can receive emigrants in any number which the Society, or the States, or the National Government may be able to transport. We have thought, it is true, that the slow growth of the Colony hitherto has been advantageous to it, but its affairs are now so settled and prosperous as to admit of a much larger annual accession to its numbers. Several thousands might now be annually colonized, provided some *preparation* were made for their reception by the erection of buildings for them, and some provision for their temporary support after their arrival. I would say that from ten to fifteen dollars would be enough to allow to each emigrant for such preparations and support. Perhaps no country is more productive and fertile than Liberia; probably one hundred thousand people might derive their subsistence from the territory already purchased, and additional territory to any desirable extent may be easily obtained.

"Suppose then we had \$100,000 at command annually, it might all be judiciously expended in a single year in removing emigrants and in *preparing* for the emigrants of future years. I should think the *wisest* course would be to send, say one thousand or fifteen hundred the first year, and double that number the next, and at the end of five years I should judge that ten thousand might be annually sent with advantage in every respect to the interests of the Colony. It would certainly be desirable to make some *selection* among those who might first offer, as much might depend on their character and habits. It may not be easy to discriminate sufficiently in this matter, and we must depend principally upon the moral means which may be set in operation in Liberia to improve and elevate the population. The new circumstances, in which emigrants find themselves there, work remarkable and most favorable changes in their character. They give them enterprise, invention, self-reliance, and high purposes and hopes!"

People in the United States are hardly aware what degree of attention and admiration the founding of this colony has excited in Europe. We have ourselves the very best reason to know that extreme interest is expressed in its prospects by learned Professors and eminent Ministers of State in Germany. The Bulletins of the Geographical Society of Paris have often heralded the rising greatness of our little African republic, and paid some of the advocates of the Society the flattering compliment of translating large extracts from their speeches. It is not long since the Chancellor of the British Exchequer, Lord Althorp, declared in Parliament that he regarded the founding of Liberia as one of the most important events of the century. It is impossible to mention without emotion the two next English names, whose approbation carries with it a blessing of great unction. The aged and venerable Thomas Clarkson is said to have listened to the details of the Society's operations with an enthusiastic delight, such as he has not manifested for twenty years: he wrote to Mr. Cresson: "For myself I am free to say, that of all things that have been going on in our favour since 1787, when the abolition of the slave trade was first seriously proposed, that which is going on in the United States is the most important. It surpasses every thing which has yet occurred." And Mr. Wilberforce, a spirit coequal with Howard and the Premier name on the rolls of humanity when she speaks with authority, (we mean when philanthropy having taken its seat in parliaments and privy councils puts on the authoritative character of state policy,) Mr. Wilberforce declares: "You have gladdened my heart by convincing me that sanguine as had been my hopes of the happy effects to be produced by your institution, all my anticipations are scanty and cold compared with the reality. This may truly be deemed a pledge of the divine favour, and believe me no Briton, I had almost said no American, can take a livelier interest than myself in your true greatness and glory." Very handsome contributions to the Society's funds have also been made in England, chiefly by the Society of Friends, a body of people enviably distinguished among religionists by the exclusive title of *sectaries of domestic freedom*.

This colony thus cheered on by the enlightened sentiment of Europe, is obviously destined to prove the best means of putting an end to the African slave trade. The attempt to crush this

piracy by guardian fleets on the coast has had but indifferent success. The whole number of Africans recaptured by the British cruisers from 1819 to 1828, was only 13,287, being on an average 1400 per annum, while the number kidnapped is supposed to have amounted to 100,000 yearly. The British officers have borne the most honourable testimony to the great benefit rendered to the service by the Colony of Liberia. For a great distance north and south of it, the trade is effectually stopped, and this not merely by show of hostile interference, but by the surer measure of luring the natives to the more profitable business of peaceful commerce. Several powerful tribes have wholly renounced the trade of slaves, and have put themselves under the protection of the colony. The sole means of shutting up forever the gate of this satanic mischief, is the planting of a number of Colonies of free American blacks along the coast; the ardent approbation and co-operation of England, France, and the Netherlands, may readily be had to give them security, and perhaps the Spanish Bourbons and the divided house of Braganza may one day be tempted to a show of a little good faith in behalf of Africa, on this plan. England is fully sensible of the reparation she owes to humanity for her deep participation in the Spanish Assiento, and for her having done her utmost to render slavery immortal in these United States. Her unrelaxed intercession with all the European powers, and with the South American, ever since the Congress of Vienna, to procure the extinction of the slave trade, has gone far to redeem her, we admit, and will cover a multitude of sins of the Castlereagh policy. All the other powers are likewise most deeply implicated in the complex guilt of that trade.

But besides its agency in suppressing the slave trade, we are not ashamed to confess that we look on the hope of spreading civilization to a great extent around Liberia, perhaps the regeneration of the whole western coast, by means of this colony, as by no means chimerical. Who shall say that a colony of half a million of civilized black men in the centre of the west coast, (and we dare believe that not less will be the population of Liberia and its sister settlements before the close of the present century,) exhibiting to the nations about it the spectacle of a well ordered State, owing its prosperity to the arts of peace, to laws, and to religion, may not spread a peaceful influence, for hundreds of leagues, never equalled in power by any impulse felt in any quarter of Africa, except in the propagation of Mahomedanism by the sword? History and tradition give us to believe that the civilization of the world had its source in the heart of Africa: why may not the reverted current be poured into a land itself once prolific of so benign a stream? Are not we, who are at this moment doubting of the possibility of civilizing a dark quarter of the world, ourselves an alien race, colonists on a land the farthest distant from the ancient seats of Christendom, which yet in the course of three centuries has be-



come a continent redundant with civilization? It was truly said at the Anniversary of the Society in 1832, that a thousand instruments for the diffusion of improvement may now be employed, which were unknown even at the time of the first founding of colonies on this continent. But all other hopes are feeble compared with a just reliance on the example of a large community of people of the *same colour*, the same descent, the same nature with the people of the Coast. Indeed, the Continent of Africa is, at the present day, before all others in the romantic interest it inspires. No speculation engages more cultivated minds than the Geography of the Interior, and no object is thought worthier of the sacrifice of precious lives, than its exploration for the satisfaction of merely scientific curiosity. Who has not glowed with the enthusiasm of Herodotus, of Burckhart, of Denham, or with the humbler zeal of the Landers? Who has not brooded over the imagination of her vast deserts, her beautiful oases, her aromatic gales? Who has not grown romantic with thoughts of her gorgeous heavens, the tropical glory of her vegetable kingdom? Above all, who is a stranger to the uncertain image of her *fabulous* old waters? To sow the principal and mother elements of human life in this land, to found society, to introduce polity, religion, morals, and laws, and to plant the arts—why shall not this be the portion of our Colony? We believe, as firmly as that we now live, that at least the Coast of Guinea is, in no great lapse of time, to undergo a purification by the instrumentality of Liberia. The philosophic imagination loves to feast itself with these hopes, and to believe that, in a century perhaps, there shall be in the orphan homes of Western Africa, an odour richer than that mentioned in the divine lines of Milton, in one of those familiar geographical passages which it is always a charm to repeat:—

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“When to them who sail  
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past  
Mozambic, off’ at sea north-east winds blow  
Sabea odours from the spicy shore  
Of Araby the blest; with such delay  
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league  
Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles.”

Should the day ever come, when, from the mouth of the Gambia to the equator, not a slave-market exists, but peace, good faith, commerce, and an increasing mental light have sway, then shall indeed the mariner, as he plies through these now infamous latitudes, slack his course, well pleased to join with the nations in the villages and the plains, in the solemn litany they offer to Heaven to deliver them for ever from the scourges they have escaped!

But a land dear to our hearts is too to be redeemed: it is our own native America, and first of all Virginia. If an exigency ever existed, and inducements to a step of deliverance were ever too forcible for reasonable men to withstand, that exigency and such inducements now stand clear in her view. But after all, it

has been asserted, that, be the present condition of Virginia bad as it may, her very existence depends on retaining her slaves:—that, take but these away and she becomes desolate! Are they indeed essential to her existence, even though it be true that she never can prosper with them, and must deteriorate from day to day while she keeps them? Has she but one possible *mode of existence*, and is she condemned to live out that through all its descending stages? Ruinous fatalism! Is it not, on the contrary, the exclamation of every observer, that no country in the world was ever more blessed than Virginia originally was: that the chief of her blessings being in their nature indestructible, (such as consist in the climate, Atlantic and central position, the number, magnitude, and arrangement of rivers and their estuaries, natural adaptation to manufactures, &c. &c.) are not yet marred, and that others, (such as fine soils, &c.) though greatly injured, may yet be considered reclaimable by the same system that makes the cold and rocky soils of New England as productive as the Delta of Egypt? Eminent agriculturists have given the opinion that it is cheaper to reclaim reduced lands than to clear new ones. We shall never believe that Virginia would not have a thousand temptations for different sorts of emigrants, for capitalists, for free labourers, and for her own sons who meditate emigration, were but measures resorted to to take the whole labour of the State out of the hands of slaves. Can any one make us believe that, with a free white population, the unparalleled facilities of water power on James river would not ere this have been made the means of fabricating manufactures to an amount greater than the whole product of tobacco of the State? But it is still maintained that Virginia can never draw the emigrants from other countries, because her inducements can not be as great as those of the new States. A great deal might be said to show, that, in a balance between Virginia without slaves, and the untenanted quarters of the west without the blessings of human neighbourhood, without proximity to the sea, without markets, without the vicinity of the church, the school-house, the mill, the smith's shop, &c.—not quite all the advantages are on the side of the west. It may be puerile to suppose, as each slave is withdrawn, that by any principle of population a freeman will take his place: doubtless the tide of free labour would not instantly begin to flow in. But as soon as the operation of removal had taken an irrecoverable tendency towards its intended results, we dare believe that an adequate supply of free labour would be at hand. Perhaps the whole amount of labour now done in the State could be performed by one third of the number of white labourers. The question, whether free labourers would come, however, to supply the place of that of slaves, is solved with greater or less ease, according as it presumes that the abstraction of the slave is to be accompanied with compensation to the master, procured from a source without the State, or that the master gives away his slave. Under the first presump-

tion the question solves itself. Under the second, the whole question depends on one's opinion whether Virginia possesses any superior capacities for the application of any extensive classes of industry. But of this we have already sufficiently treated under our first head.

We leave this momentous question now with the people of the counties of Virginia: it is for them to decide what effort they will make to diminish the evils of slavery among themselves. That slavery is not an evil to their prosperity they cannot, will not say. Will they say a remedy is impossible? It is any thing but impossible—it tempts, lures them, and will force itself on them. Will they say that the evil will cure itself? It will not cure itself—it ravages with increasing violence, and there is no hope of its decrease, but from its soon reducing the energies of Virginia to such a state of imbecility as to be incapable of furnishing *material* for such an amount of evil. Let them not assent to the view of the eloquent Mr. Brown, (*utinam noster esset*) who seems to wish them to wait (some centuries!) until the Mississippi Valley, now but sprinkled with population, is full, and the ebb of population begins towards poor, effete, decrepid Virginia. Will they say they are afraid to touch the mighty evil—they leave it to their children? They will have learnt what must then be the heritage of their children. Or will they fold their arms in torpid indifference to the utmost depth of the calamities they provoke? Then we shall understand them; they are prepared, not merely for enduring the present evil, but for that "worse," when the gloom of to-day shall thicken into a deep darkness, and upon that darkness shall rush down an awful cloud of domestic war, like another night shut in upon midnight!

To the young men of Virginia, who have lately pledged their future manhood and age to the prosecution of this work of deliverance, we say, let them remember in the presence of what a host of witnesses their championship is to be exhibited. In a community where popularity is essential to public usefulness, let them yet not fear, lest the popular favour desert them. The name of the Great Democrat is once more in the van:—a power that never failed in Virginia. Many indeed are the subjects of unhappy conflict in the United States, on which we have but too much reason to wish that Mr. Jefferson were still alive to give his umpirage. Let us at least hail the unexpected appearance, that offers guidance on this domestic theme, the greatest perhaps of all. Let them be cheered by such auspices; again, "he heads the flock of war."—But we should be loyal to the grandeur of their cause, if we did not forearm them with fortitude to meet odium, to suffer desertion, and to bear with mortifying reverses of every shape. The cause is great enough to deserve these testimonies of its importance. They have before them no easy career, but their destiny to run it is the more enviable. Let the words of Petrarch to Stephen Colonna sink into their heart of hearts: "few companions shalt thou have by the better way: so much the more do I pray thee, gentle spirit, not to leave off thy magnanimous undertaking." Or would they man themselves to the proper pitch, with the wisdom of a better moralist than Petrarch, let them know: *alii de vita, alii de gloria, et benevolentia citium in discrimen vocantur.*—Sunt ergo domesticæ fortuæ non inferiores militariibus. (Cic. de Off. I. 24, 25.)

When, some years ago, upon a public occasion, a young Virginian\* complained of the tone in which an American Senator boasted that he had read himself out of all romantic notions on this subject, he ventured to declare that might he but humbly sit at the feet of Charles Fox, and glow with kindred feeling to his, (for he was at no time forgetful of the thought of giving freedom to the African, and spent his last breath in achieving the suppression of the slave trade, though the bill received the royal signature after his death,) he should not envy the American who was so very free of that fine enthusiasm. Since that day it has been that Virginian's lot to stand at the grave of Fox, and had he dared attempt to chasten his feelings into a worthiness for the auspices he had thus chosen in his boyhood, he might have found a scene so literal as to startle him! There may the foes and the friends of that great statesman see how the passions of transient events give way before the immortal essence of one deed for general humanity! By his foes let be forgotten the Coalition and the East India Bill; by his party friends, forgotten for a moment the struggle to diminish the influence of the crown, and to uphold liberty under all the disgrace of the French excesses in her name. Behold what the sculptor chooses, out of all Mr. Fox's claims to renown, to transmit to posterity! He has carved the dying statesman recumbent on his tomb, and at his feet the most conspicuous figure is a liberated African on his knees, raising his shattered chains with clasped hands, and joining with his first hymn of freedom, a prayer to avert the death of the vindicator, assertor, liberator† of Africa.—To our mind, that is the most eloquent marble in Westminster Abbey!

\* African Repository, September, 1827.

† The two former are titles given in the Civil Law to the advocates for liberty, when the right of any one to freedom was in suit. Hein. II. p. 381, ed. Dupin.







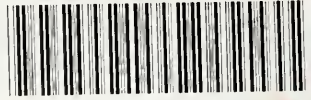








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